Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Nov/Dec 2012 • $4.50

Jagannatha Puri

RATHAYĀTRĀ

A Front-Row View

A million pilgrims crowd Grand Road in Puri, Odisha, for Lord Jagannātha's annual chariot festival.

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BACK to GODH

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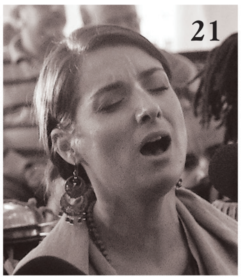
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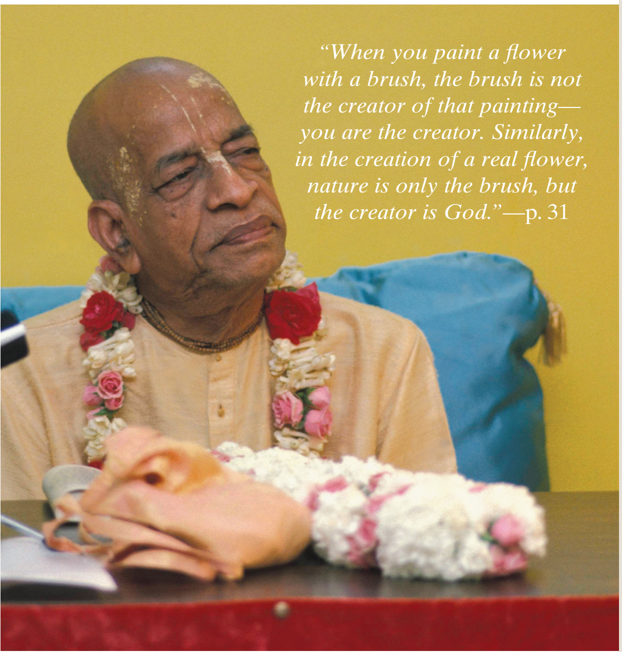
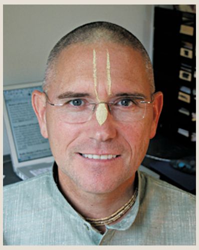
COVER India's ancient chariot festival, held annually in Puri, Odisha, attracts a huge crowd of people eager to see Lord Kṛṣṇa as the deity Jagannātha. Please see the article beginning on page 38. (Photos by Dhruva Maharāja Dāsa.)



"When you paint a flower with a brush, the brush is not the creator of that painting—you are the creator. Similarly, in the creation of a real flower, nature is only the brush, but the creator is God."—p. 31

WELCOME



One of the most popular festivals for Kṛṣṇa's devotees is Rathayātrā, the Jagannātha chariot festival. The festival started many centuries ago in Puri, Odisha, was brought to the West by Śrīla Prabhupāda, and is now celebrated by Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees all over the world. In this issue a devotee from the West gives his impressions on seeing the festival in the place of its origin for the first time.

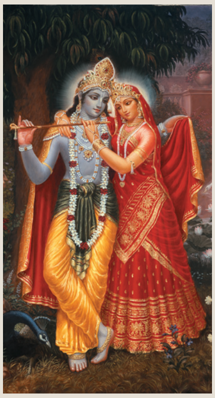
This issue coincides with the month of Kārttika, or Dāmodara. In "Kārttika: Lord Kṛṣṇa's Favorite Month," Vaṁśī Vihārī Dāsa explains why this month, especially, can inspire the devotees' festive spirit.

A life filled with festivals centered on Kṛṣṇa is one of the many benefits of the practice of *bhakti-yoga,* or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As Rāsa Puruṣa Dāsa tell us in "Kṛṣṇa, the Purest of the Pure," contact with Kṛṣṇa cleanses our hearts. Śivarāma Swami explains in "The Seven Wonders of the Word" that our hearts need to be cleaned of envy, the cause of our suffering in this world of matter, and that a clean heart is one of the first results of offenseless chanting of Kṛṣṇa's names. In "Misplaced Doubt" Viśākhā Devī Dāsī says that chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa destroys doubt, the enemy of spiritual progress.

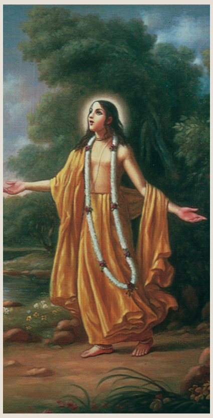
Hare Kṛṣṇa.—*Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor*

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are together the one Supreme Absolute Truth.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

BACK TO
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*The Magazine of the
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Letters

Worshiping Hanumān

I saw a letter in the last issue of BTG with a question about Hanumān and worship of him by ISKCON devotees. I recalled that when Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami (then Satsvarūpa Dāsa Brahmacārī) went to Boston to open the first ISKCON temple there (1967), the place he found to open the ISKCON center was a small storefront in a neighborhood that had its share of trouble. Some of the neighborhood ruffians would throw rocks through the windows and otherwise threaten the temple and the devotees.

Śrīla Prabhupāda (then called "Swamiji") told Satsvarūpa Mahārāja to have a deity of Hanumān and to pray to him for protection. So, there is a history in our movement and precedent for us to pray to Hanumān and to worship him. I thought that this was worth mentioning.

Kīrtana Rasa Dāsa
Saratoga Springs, New York

An Alternative Mantra

I have been chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* on my beads for many years now, but of late I started noticing that it had become more of a mechanical activity. I was introduced to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mantra *oṁ namoḥ bhagavate vāsudevāya* about twelve months ago and have been doing the same on my beads. I am able to concentrate better and seem to derive a new "taste" in my meditation. Is chanting the *mahā-mantra* and chanting *oṁ namoḥ bhagavate vāsudevāya* on the same plane? If yes, then why am I perceiving a difference?

Arun Dhir
Melbourne, Australia

Our reply: In the mantra you refer to, *vāsudevāya* means "unto Vāsudeva." The name *Vāsudeva* refers to Kṛṣṇa as the son of Vasudeva and Devakī. So chanting Vāsudeva is certainly spiritual, as Kṛṣṇa is identical to His name.

The *mahā-mantra,* however, includes Rādhā, in the form of the word Hare, which is the vocative of Hara, a name for Rādhā. For followers of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, it is essential to address both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Our philosophy teaches that we cannot approach Kṛṣṇa directly but must first receive the mercy of Rādhā. Even in the *mahā-mantra,* "Hare" comes before "Kṛṣṇa."

Śrīla Prabhupada, following the example of the disciplic succession from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, instructed his disciples to chant sixteen rounds of the *mahā-mantra* every day, not sixteen rounds of some other mantra. When Prabhupāda's edition of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* came out in the 1970s, devotees noticed that Prabhupāda there greatly emphasized the chanting of the Pañca-tattva mantra (*jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu nityānanda śrī advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*), and some devotees started chanting rounds of that mantra on their beads, in addition to their prescribed sixteen rounds of the *mahā-mantra.* Prabhupāda told them not to do so. He said that our way was to chant *japa* of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra.*

We can't say exactly why you may be feeling more spiritual taste in chanting *oṁ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya.* There seems to be no philosophical explanation for this, as far as we know. Our inclination is to think that something less than spiritual is going on, perhaps having to do with the novelty of it. While there's nothing wrong with chanting that mantra as much as you like, we suggest that you not diminish your chanting of the *mahā-mantra.* Ultimately, our success depends on the guru's blessings, and Prabhupāda and his disciples prescribe the chanting of the *mahā-mantra.* So for those who align themselves with Prabhupada and ISKCON, focusing on chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is the safest course.

Responsibility And Supreme Will

If everything happens by the will of the Supreme Lord and not even a small leaf can move without His will, then how can we be responsible for our deeds, good or bad?

Shalini Farma
Via the Internet

Our reply: In everything that happens there are three "doers." The primary doer is the Supreme Lord, because without His sanction nothing can happen. But the Lord also allows the desire of another "doer," namely the living entity, the *jīva* soul, to come to fruition. The will of the soul tells the Lord, "I want . . . ," and the Lord, considering the *jīva's* desire and karmic situation, directs the third "doer," the material nature (*prakṛti*), to arrange for the *jīva's* desire to be fulfilled.

This is a very complicated subject. Here are just a few more things to consider.

One is that the Lord is in the heart. He judges the *jīva's* desire by actions and deeply rooted longings —not just flickering prayer ("Dear Lord, make me a millionaire")—and also the previous karmic earnings of that soul. Taking all this into consideration, the Lord arranges to fulfill, as much as He determines appropriate, the desire of the living entity. So in this sense the *jīva* is the master of his fate, since the *jīva's* desire determines how things will go.

Another thing that needs to be considered is that the Lord is completely independent. He can do what He wants, although He may do it through His various agents. And, although generally He makes the arrangements as requested by the *jīva's* desire, He may choose to direct the *jīva* differently. He also may fulfill the *jīva's* desire in such a way that the desire is destroyed in the heart and the *jīva* thus moves closer to self-realization. The Lord may show extra mercy to one who has some interest in spiritual life.

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead fulfills the material desires of a devotee who approaches Him with such motives, but He does not bestow benedictions upon the devotee that will cause him to demand more benedictions again. However, the Lord willingly gives the devotee shelter at His own lotus feet, even though such a person does not aspire for it, and that shelter satisfies all his desires. That is the Supreme Personality's special mercy." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.19.27)

(*please turn to page 55*)

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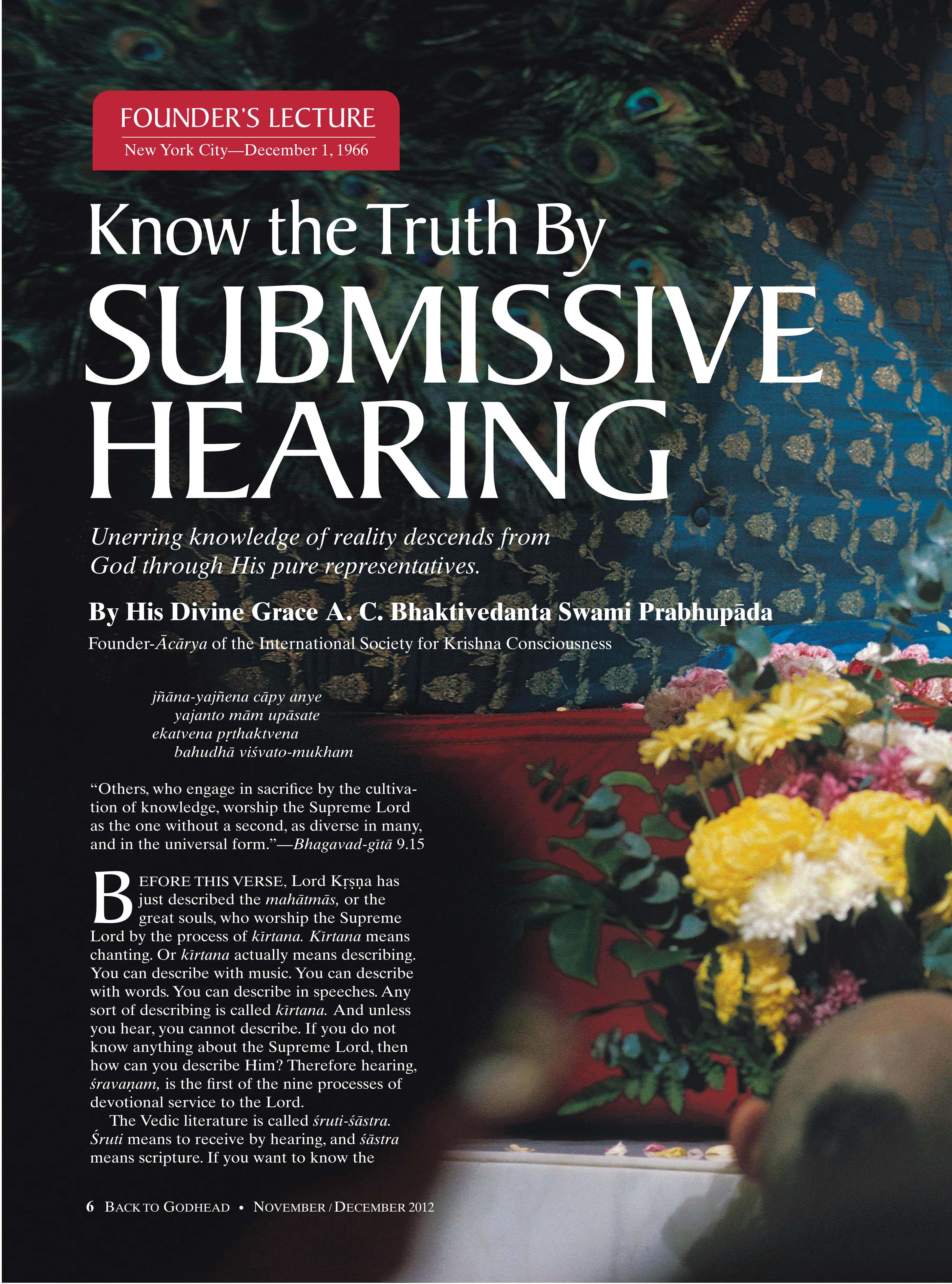

FOUNDER'S LECTURE

New York City—December 1, 1966

Know the Truth By SUBMISSIVE HEARING

Unerring knowledge of reality descends from God through His pure representatives.

By His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

jñāna-yajñena cāpy anye
yajanto mām upāsate
ekatvena pṛthaktvena
bahudhā viśvato-mukham

"Others, who engage in sacrifice by the cultivation of knowledge, worship the Supreme Lord as the one without a second, as diverse in many, and in the universal form."—*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.15

BEFORE THIS VERSE, Lord Kṛṣṇa has just described the *mahātmās,* or the great souls, who worship the Supreme Lord by the process of *kīrtana. Kīrtana* means chanting. Or *kīrtana* actually means describing. You can describe with music. You can describe with words. You can describe in speeches. Any sort of describing is called *kīrtana.* And unless you hear, you cannot describe. If you do not know anything about the Supreme Lord, then how can you describe Him? Therefore hearing, *śravaṇam,* is the first of the nine processes of devotional service to the Lord.

The Vedic literature is called *śruti-śāstra. Śruti* means to receive by hearing, and *śāstra* means scripture. If you want to know the

Supreme, you do not need to qualify yourself materially. You can remain what you are. God has given you the power of hearing. If you hear from authoritative sources, then you become perfect, simply by hearing. Therefore the first principle, hearing, is recommended.

Formerly, students heard the *Vedas* from the spiritual master. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* you'll find that Arjuna is hearing from Kṛṣṇa. He's not studying Vedānta philosophy on the battlefield. He is simply hearing. That is the process. You can hear at any place. Even on the battlefield you can hear from the authoritative source.

The process to acquire knowledge is hearing. Hearing means receiving the knowledge, not manufacturing it. Some persons think, "Oh, why shall I hear from him? I can think. I can speculate. I can manufacture something new and create my own group."

Hearing is so powerful that simply by hearing from an authoritative source you can become completely perfect.

These are nonsensical ideas. This is not the Vedic process. The Vedic process is hearing, the descending process. There are two processes of knowledge: ascending and descending. The ascending process means trying to go high by your strength, and the descending process means receiving the pure knowledge from above. The ascending process is not recommended in the Vedic way of knowledge. The Vedic way is to receive knowledge by submissive aural reception from the spiritual master to the student.

As we have read in the Fourth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.2), *evaṁ paramparā-prāptam imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ:* "In this way traditionally—from the spiritual master to the student—this knowledge was imparted." The Lord said, "I imparted this knowledge first of all to the sun-god, and the sun-god imparted this knowledge to his son, Manu, and Manu imparted this knowledge to his son, Ikṣvāku." Ikṣvāku was the king of this planet. So from Ikṣvāku, this knowledge is coming down from the father to the son or from the master to the disciple. And because that disciplic succession was broken, therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa said, "I am speaking again that old system of knowledge to you, Arjuna, because you are My devotee; you are My dear friend."

Hearing is so powerful that simply by hearing from an authoritative source you can become completely perfect. It must be submissive hearing, of course. *Jñāne prayāsam udapāsya namanta eva.* This is a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.3). Don't be an upstart, it suggests. Don't try to understand the supreme knowledge, the Absolute Truth, by your strength. You are very poor. Your senses are imperfect. You cannot understand. You should give up that process. *Jñāne prayāsam.* Rather, attempt to know the Supreme by the descending process.

"Oh, I shall know. I'll manufacture my own way." This way is going on nowadays. Everyone is thinking, "Why shall I accept any authority? I shall think for myself to understand what I am and what my duty is." This is going on. But this is not the Vedic process. The Vedic process is *śravaṇam,* hearing from authority.

We must give up the foolish process of trying to understand the Absolute Truth by our own attempt and become submissive. To be submissive means we must know our imperfectness.

Acknowledging Our Four Faults

In these meetings I have several times described our imperfectness. As long as we are conditioned, we have four kinds of imperfectness. One is that we must commit mistakes. Nobody can say, "I never commit any mistakes." It is not possible. You must. To err is human. Another imperfectness is illusion, to accept one thing as something else. For example, we accept the body as the self. We identify with the body, every one of us. If we ask you what you are, you will reply, "Oh, I am American." Your body is American, but you are not that body. This misidentification is illusion.

The third fault is that our senses are imperfect. We are very much proud of seeing, but as soon as the light is turned off, we cannot see. So our seeing is conditional. All our senses are conditional. Therefore they are imperfect.

The fourth defect is our propensity to cheat. A person who does not know anything cheats others by claiming to know everything. He is fool number one, but he wants to start a group of students and teach them foolish things. This is cheating.

One must know from the authoritative sources and preach that knowledge. Kṛṣṇa taught Arjuna, and that philosophy is still being transmitted. Those who accept *Bhagavad-gītā* according to the same principle as Arjuna are real students of *Bhagavad-gītā.*

Our attempt to understand the Absolute Truth by our faulty senses and experience is futile. We must hear. *Śravaṇam.* That is the Vedic process.

The student used to go to the master at his school, known as the *gurukula.* Every *brāhmaṇa,* every self-realized soul, every *vipra,* or expert in the knowledge of Vedic literature, would be provided with some *brahmacārīs,* celibate boys. They would follow the rules and regulations of *brahmacārī* life and live with the spiritual master, and the spiritual master would teach them real knowledge from Vedic literature. That is the process.

One should not adopt the ascending process. *Jñāne prayāsam udapāsya. Udapāsya* means "Give it up." And *namanta eva:* "Be submissive." *Jīvanti san-mukharitāṁ bhavadīya-vārtām.* One must live in this way and hear from the self-realized soul—*san-mukharitām.*

Kṛṣṇa's Representative

Arjuna is hearing from Kṛṣṇa, from the perfect person. One must hear from Kṛṣṇa or His representative. His representative is a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna was made a representative of Kṛṣṇa. How? Because, as Kṛṣṇa said, *bhakto 'si:* "You are My devotee." Nobody can become a representative of Kṛṣṇa, or God, without becoming His devotee. One who thinks "I am God" cannot become the representative of God.

Suppose you are a businessman and you send your representative to secure business. If he represents himself to the customer, "I am the proprietor," how long can he continue? As soon as the master knows "This foolish man is representing himself as the proprietor of this firm," he will cancel his employment at once. Because the so-called representative is cheating; he's not the proprietor.

Similarly, anyone who says "I am God" should not preach. To acquire knowledge of God one can think, "I am God." But that is another thing. This "I am God" means to understand the quality of God, because I am qualitatively God. I am part and parcel of God; therefore my qualities are the same as God's. A particle of gold is gold. It is nothing but gold. Similarly, although we are very minute fragments of the Supreme, still our quality is the same as the Supreme's.

If I study myself, then I study God also, because I can understand the quality of God. But I may not understand the quantity. Suppose your want to buy rice. First you examine whether the item has the qualities of rice you desire. Then when you decide to buy the rice, you may ask about the quantity available.

You are qualitatively one with God. Therefore, if you study your propensities, your qualities, then you can understand God.

That is a process. But you cannot preach, "I am God." Because if you promote yourself as God, then people may ask you, "If you are God, then show me your all-powerfulness." That you cannot show. So you cannot preach, "I am God."

The Universal Form

Kṛṣṇa has proved that He is God. How? In the *Bhagavad-gītā.* Now we are reading the Ninth Chapter. In the Eleventh Chapter Arjuna requests, "O Kṛṣṇa, will You kindly show me Your universal form?" Kṛṣṇa showed him. Arjuna was teaching the world that in the future so many fools would represent themselves as God. Don't be fooled by them. Just ask, "Show me your universal form." Only on seeing that should you accept him as God. Don't very cheaply accept any fool as God.

The claim to be God is the highest imperfection. A person under the stringent laws of the material nature gets a toothache, becomes overwhelmed, and declares himself God. Only similar foolish people can accept this sort of thing.

God is supreme. Nobody can be equal with God. In the Vedic literature God is called *asamaurdhva. Asama* means that nobody's equal to Him. And nobody is higher than Him. *Ūrdhva* means higher. Nobody can be higher than God, and nobody can be equal to God. However great they may be, everyone is lower than God.

A verse in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.33) states, *śiva-viriñci-nutam. Śiva* means Lord Śiva, and *viriñci* means Lord Brahmā. They are considered to be the topmost demigods in the material world. This verse states that they also offer their respectful

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millennia ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in b**u**t, long **ā** like the **a** in f**a**r (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in ev**a**de, long **ī** like the **i** in p**i**que. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **ri**m, and **c** like the **ch** in **ch**air. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in staun**ch-h**eart, hed**ge-h**og, and re**d-h**ot. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or his great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

obeisances to Viṣṇu, or God.

Nobody can be equal to God. Therefore, instead of trying to become God or instead of trying to understand God with our tiny knowledge and imperfect senses, better to become submissive. Give up this foolish habit of "I can know God." Just become submissive and hear from authorities. *San-mukharitām.*

Who is the authority? Kṛṣṇa—God—or His representative. Lord Jesus Christ is the representative of God. So he's an authority. Any incarnation of Kṛṣṇa is an authority. God's representative will never say, "I am God." He will say, "I am the servant of God." That confirms that he's the representative of God. The authority or representative does not say, "I am God," but he says, "I am the servant of God. I am the son of God. I am the devotee of God." He is the real representative. We have to hear from him.

The authority or representative does not say, "I am God," but he says, "I am the servant of God." We have to hear from him.

I am just trying to explain to you the process of hearing. We must submissively hear from the authorized source, the representative of God.

Remain in Your Position

The verse I've been quoting (*jñāne prayāsam . . .*) goes on to say, *sthāne sthitāḥ:* keep yourself in your position. You are hearing *Bhagavad-gītā.* Some of you are medical men. Some of you are engineers. Some of you are businessmen. Some of you are clerks. That doesn't matter. Keep yourself in your position. Remain as Americans. Remain as Christians. It doesn't matter. But there is no harm in hearing the *Gītā.* You'll get knowledge. You'll become a better Christian. You'll become a better American. You see? It is not that we are trying to convert Americans into Indians, or Indians into Americans, or Christians into Hindus. That is not our mission. We are just preaching the science of Kṛṣṇa, the science of God: Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Everyone can learn this science. When you go to college there is no question of whether you are American or Indian or African. Everyone is allowed in the schools, colleges, and universities to learn scientific knowledge. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the science of God. Everyone can take it. *Sthāne sthitāḥ.* Keep yourself in your place. There is no need of change.

Sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām. Śruti means by hearing, with these ears. *Tanu-vāṅ-manobhiḥ:* "Just try to assimilate with your body, with your mind, with your intelligence." If you do this, then the result will be *prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām:* you'll conquer the unconquerable.

One of God's names is Ajita. Ajita means that nobody can conquer Him. Because everyone is lower than God, who will conquer Him? Therefore His name is Ajita, "unconquerable." What to speak of God, you cannot conquer even the energy of God. In your present conditioned life, you are under the energy of God, the material energy. You cannot conquer even the energy, so how can you conquer God? Not possible. So one name of God is Ajita.

Kṛṣṇa is another name of God. Of course, according to Vedic literature Kṛṣṇa is the principal name. God has many names. According to His work, according to different persons' understanding, He has got innumerable names. But in the Vedic literature it is said that Kṛṣṇa is the principal name. Because Kṛṣṇa means "the highest pleasure."

Ajita means one who is unconquerable. So that unconquerable becomes conquered. How? By this process. What is that process? Just submissively hear and try to assimilate it nicely. That's all.

Hear *Bhagavad-gītā* submissively. Do not be puffed up with false knowledge. Every one of us should think that we are ignorant and have to receive knowledge. That should be the first step. Receive knowledge, try to assimilate it, try to apply it with your body, with your mind, with your intelligence. Then you'll understand God so nicely that although God is unconquerable, you'll conquer Him by this simple process.

When you are able to do so, then you can make *kīrtana.* Whatever you learn, if you describe it then that will help you to elevate yourself on this path of knowledge. Whatever you are hearing tonight, if you try to repeat it amongst your friends, amongst your family members, then you'll be established in this knowledge. That is called *kīrtana. Śravaṇaṁ kīrtanam.*

Every day and night we are hearing something. There is television. There is radio. There is newspaper. There are so many things to hear. But devotional service doesn't begin with that kind of hearing. *Śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ.* The word *viṣṇoḥ* here means Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord. You should devote your time to hearing and chanting about Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa. If you simply do that, then you shall become free from material attachment and shall be elevated to the supreme place, the kingdom of God.

This is the remedy suggested in this age. You cannot practice sacrifice as was done in a previous age. You cannot practice speculation. You cannot practice yoga. You can simply practice this: Submissively hear from authoritative sources, try to assimilate what you've heard, and become perfect.

Thank you very much.

Glossary

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Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna. (Cited as Bg.)

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Darśana—"viewing," audience with a deity or saintly person.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.

Kīrtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see "Godhead").

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādī—one who regards the Absolute Truth as ultimately impersonal.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goodness, passion, and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasāda—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion.

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—"chariot festival": a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śāstra—scriptures, especially the Vedic scriptures of India.

Śrī—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas,* which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. (Cited as *Bhāg.*)

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

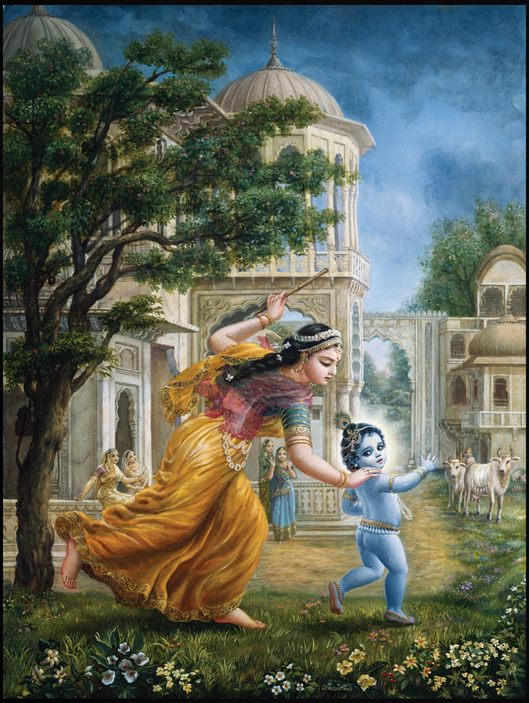
Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.

Kārttika

Lord Kṛṣṇa's Favorite Month

A time filled with love, devotion, and gratitude.

By Vaṁśī Vihārī Dāsa



Painting by Dīrghā Devī Dāsī. Background photo by Yamarāja Dāsa.

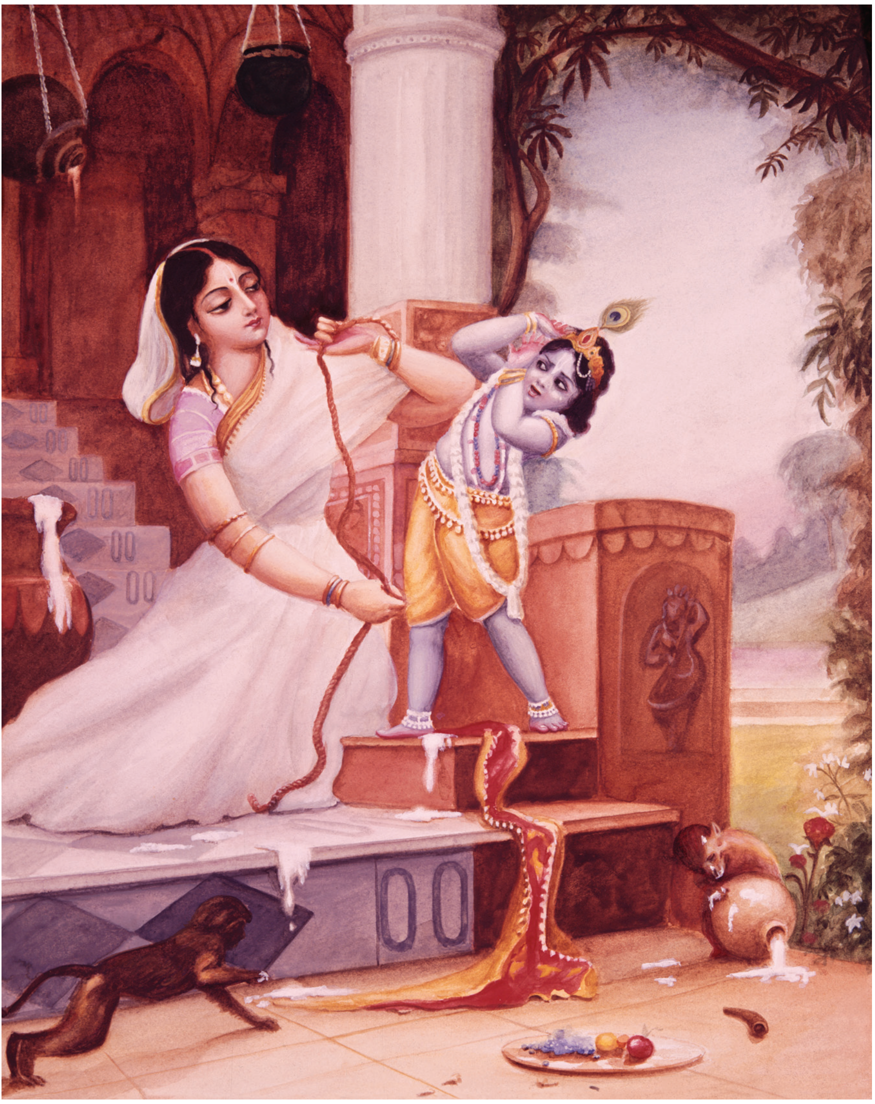
A cherished devotional practice performed during Kārttika is the offering of flames to the temple deities (left). Inset above: Mother Yaśodā chases naughty Kṛṣṇa, who has just broken a pot of butter.

AFTER GOING through the intense summer and a humid monsoon, we in India perceive *śarat,* or autumn, as one of the most beautiful seasons of the year. According to the Vedic calendar, *śarat* falls during the months of Aśvin and Kārttika, of which Kārttika carries special significance because it is favored by Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Everyone loves certain foods, drinks, clothes, and music, and Lord Kṛṣṇa is no exception. In fact, we have our likes because we are parts of Kṛṣṇa, who has His own personal likes. Kṛṣṇa loves butter, yellow clothing, peacock feathers, cows, flutes, and the land of Vrindavan. Similarly, of all months, He loves Kārttika the best.

A Month of Love

Devotional service can be performed at any time, in any place, yet devotees know well that devotional service performed during Kārttika is especially pleasing to the Lord. Therefore they perform additional austerities and devo-



Painting by Muralidhara Dāsa

Mother Yaśodā struggles to tie Kṛṣṇa to a grinding mortar.

tional practices during this month. Although the Vedic scriptures describe in detail material benefits one may derive by performing devotional service during Kārttika, pure devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa have no interest in these. Rather, they are interested only in pleasing the Lord. Every year, ISKCON devotees eagerly await the arrival of Kārttika, when they daily sing the *Dāmodarāṣṭakam* prayers and offer heartfelt love and devotion as they circle ghee lamps before the Lord. Throughout the month they are so immersed in the childhood pastimes of Kṛṣṇa as Dāmodara that you can hear them constantly sing about them.

The *Dāmodarāṣṭakam* prayers, composed by Satyavrata Muni, beautifully describe the Dāmodara pastime, in which Yaśodā binds mischievous Kṛṣṇa to a grinding mortar. The prayers also give information about God, His devotees, and the science of devotional service. The essential lessons we learn from the pastime and the *Dāmodarāṣṭakam* prayers is that the all-pervading, all-powerful Lord is easily conquered by the love of His devotee and that the love-saturated devotees desire nothing except to constantly hear and glorify His pastimes.

> O Lord Dāmodara, although You are able to give all kinds of benedictions, I do not pray to You for the boon of impersonal liberation, nor for the highest liberation of eternal life in Vaikuṇṭha, nor for any other, similar boon. O Lord, I simply wish that this form of Yours as baby Gopāla in Vṛndāvana may ever be manifest in my heart, for what is the use to me of any other boon besides this? Your supremely enchanting face, encircled by shining locks of dark-blue curling hair, resembles the fully blossomed lotus tinged with a reddish luster due to its being kissed again and again by Mother Yaśodā. May this vision of Your lotus face, with lips as red as a *bimba* fruit, remain forever in my heart. Millions of other benedictions are of no benefit to me.
>
> —*Dāmodarāṣṭakam* 4–5

This prayer reveals the mood of pure devotional service and the life of pure devotees—the essence and the sweetness of the month of Kārttika.

The Dāmodara Pastime

According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Lord Kṛṣṇa enacted the Dāmodara-līlā on the day of Dīpāvalī (Diwali). In this pastime, which is described in the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* Kṛṣṇa angered His mother, Yaśodā, by breaking a pot of butter. He then ran away when He saw a furious Yaśodā chasing Him. After a great struggle, Yaśodā caught baby Kṛṣṇa and tried to bind Him with rope to a grinding mortar. But surprisingly, she found the rope she was using was two inches too short. Although she added more rope, every time she tried to bind Kṛṣṇa she found the rope was short by exactly two inches. Finally, Kṛṣṇa, appreciating His mother's hard endeavor, agreed to be bound. Devotees then began to call Him Dāmodara, "one whose *udara* (belly) is bound by *dāma* (ropes)." Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

> Yogis, mystics, want to catch Kṛṣṇa as Paramātmā, and with great austerities and penances they try to approach Him, yet they cannot. Here we see, however, that Kṛṣṇa is going to be caught by Yaśodā and is running away in fear. This illustrates the difference between the *bhakta* and the yogi. Yogis cannot reach Kṛṣṇa, but for pure devotees like mother Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa is already

> caught. Kṛṣṇa was even afraid of mother Yaśodā's stick. . . . Kṛṣṇa is afraid of mother Yaśodā, and yogis are afraid of Kṛṣṇa.
>
> —*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.9.9, Purport

When devotees see the master of the entire universe bound by the love of His devotee, their hearts are filled with extreme gratitude. Attracted by Kṛṣṇa's divine qualities, their hearts are uncontrollably pulled toward Him. Although devotees do not wish to subdue the Lord, He takes extra pleasure in being ordered and controlled by His devotees. Each tries to be controlled by the other, because where love is present, happiness lies not in winning but in being won over. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.16.34), "The Lord and the devotees both conquer. The Lord is conquered by the devotees, and the devotees are conquered by the Lord. Because of being conquered by one another, they both derive transcendental bliss from their relationship."

After immersing their minds in this wonderful pastime for an entire month, devotees feel much more closely connected to their Lord. You can also try this immersion. If possible, visit an ISKCON temple and take part in the *Dāmodarāṣṭakam* prayers throughout Kārttika, offering your own devotion to Lord Dāmodara with your lamp. If you cannot visit an ISKCON temple, please arrange to sing these prayers and offer lamps at home.

Other Events in Kārttika

After killing the demon Rāvaṇa, Lord Rāmacandra entered Ayodhya on Dīpāvalī. To celebrate this event the residents of Ayodhya used lamps to illuminate the city, which in the Lord's fourteen-year absence had come to resemble a city haunted by ghosts.

Ayodhya is like our heart, and Sītā-Rāma are the life-force within that heart. Ayodhya was once a wealthy city, but when Sītā and Rāma left it, the residents felt they had lost their hearts and behaved like moving corpses. It is impossible to describe the mental agony these people suffered in separation from their beloved Lord. They performed their daily duties only as a formality and maintained their lives only in the hope that one day they would again see Lord Rāma. Caitanya Mahāprabhu expressed His own feelings of separation in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka* (7): *śūnyāyitaṁ jagat sarvaṁ govinda-viraheṇa me.* "In Your absence, I feel that the entire universe is a dreary void."

When Lord Rāma returned to Ayodhya, the city's residents regained their life and their distressed hearts lit up with joy. This light became manifest in the form of lighted lamps.

Govardhana Pūjā also falls in the month of Kārttika. When Kṛṣṇa convinced Nanda Mahārāja to stop the family's traditional Indra Pūjā, an infuriated Indra sent a heavy downpour of rain over Vrindavan. But because Kṛṣṇa protected Vrindavan, Indra could not destroy even a particle of dust of this holy land. With the little finger of His left hand, Kṛṣṇa effortlessly lifted Govardhana Hill and crushed Indra's pride, thus protecting the devotees of Vrindavan.

This pastime, too, proves Kṛṣṇa's unlimited love for His devotees. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.66) Kṛṣṇa assures us that if we abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender to Him, He will protect us in all situations. By lifting Govardhana Hill, Kṛṣṇa showed how He will go to any extent to protect His loving devotees. By meditating on this pastime, devotees feel extremely grateful and are ready to give up everything and surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

Finally, for devotees of ISKCON the month of Kārttika holds another importance: ISKCON's founder-*ācārya,* His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, left this world during this month and rejoined Lord Kṛṣṇa in His eternal pastimes in the spiritual world. Everyone, especially devotees in ISKCON, will remain eternally indebted to Śrīla Prabhupāda, without whose guidance we would have never understood the significance of Dāmodara-līlā, Dīpāvalī, Govardhana Pūjā, or Karttika, nor would we have appreciated the inconceivable love between the Lord and His devotee.

Vaṁśī Vihārī Dāsa is the assistant editor of Bhagavad-darshan, *the Hindi edition of BTG.*

Glories of the Month of Kārttika

From Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī's Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, *Sixteenth Vilāsa, Volume One*

IN THE *Skanda Purāṇa* it is said: "The pious result obtained by bathing in all holy places and giving all charities is not equal to one ten-millionth part of the result obtained by following the vow of Kārttika."

In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is said: "Of the twelve months, Kārttika is the most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa. To anyone who even slightly worships Lord Viṣṇu during its time, the month of Kārttika gives residence in Lord Viṣṇu's transcendental abode."

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is pleased by the offering of a single lamp during the month of Kārttika. Lord Kṛṣṇa glorifies anyone who lights a lamp for someone else to offer."

"O tiger of sages, a person who during the month of Kārttika hears the topics of Lord Hari becomes free from the sufferings of hundreds and millions of births."

"They who during the month of Kārttika bathe, keep an all-night vigil, offer lamps, and protect a *tulasī* forest attain spiritual forms like Lord Viṣṇu's."

"Doubting is not very favorable when information is received from the proper source."
—Srila Prabhupada

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Misplaced DOUBT

Doubts about spiritual reality and spiritual practices arise from misidentifying with our body and mind.

By Viśākhā Devī Dāsī

IN THE *Bhagavad-gītā* Arjuna addresses Kṛṣṇa as Madhusūdana because Kṛṣṇa killed a demon named Madhu (*sūdana* means "killer"). Arjuna wants Kṛṣṇa to kill the demon of his doubts just as He killed Madhu.

As Arjuna had doubts—lack of certainty or conviction—about spiritual knowledge and activities, so do all conditioned souls. Generally, what we doubt reflects our particular conditioning. But even in spiritual matters doubt is not always demonic. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.26.30) tells us: "Doubt, misapprehension, correct apprehension, memory, and sleep, as determined by their different functions, are said to be the distinct characteristics of intelligence."

Śrīla Prabhupāda comments:

> Doubt is one of the important functions of intelligence; blind acceptance of something does not give evidence of intelligence. Therefore the word *saṁśaya* [doubt] is very important; in order to cultivate intelligence, one should be doubtful in the beginning. But doubting is not very favorable when information is received from the proper source. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says that doubting the words of the authority is the cause of destruction. . . .
>
> By intelligence only one can understand things as they are. By intelligence only can one understand whether or not he is the body. The study to determine whether one's identity is spiritual or material begins in

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> doubt. When one is able to analyze his actual position, the false identification with the body is detected.

Here Śrīla Prabhupāda explains what causes doubt: our misunderstanding the self as material. In fact, the self, or soul, is spiritual, and thus the root of doubt is buried deep. Because of our incorrect perception that we are material beings, doubt pervades our consciousness, as well it should. In some corner of our awareness we know that this basic premise is completely wrong. Thus we doubt.

In Prabhupāda's words: "The knot of doubtfulness is tied when the soul identifies with the material world. That knot is also called *ahaṅkāra,* the junction of matter and spirit." (*Bhāg.* 3.24.18, Purport)

Besides misidentifying our self with our body and mind, without proper knowledge we see only the surface of the world around us and cannot perceive Kṛṣṇa's energies acting behind it. Thus we doubt Him and His activities: "The material energy is always provoking doubts about the supreme authority of the Lord." (*Bhāg.* 1.17.23, Purport)

Kṛṣṇa Himself declares to Arjuna that the cause of doubt is a lack of knowledge: "Doubts have arisen in your heart out of ignorance." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.42)

And Kṛṣṇa indicts those who lack knowledge: "Ignorant and faithless persons who doubt the revealed scriptures do not attain God consciousness; they fall down. For the doubting soul there is happiness neither in this world nor in the next." (Bg. 4.40)

Commenting on this text, the great saint Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes:

> Kṛṣṇa mentions three classes of people in this verse: (1) the ignorant, who are foolish, (2) the faithless, who know scripture but having seen the mutual disagreements of proponents of various theories do not trust the scripture, and (3) the doubters, who have faith but think, "I don't know whether this process will be effective in my case."
>
> Doubters have some faith, but they nevertheless doubt that following scripture will truly award results. They thus follow, but without full faith, hope, and optimism. Such doubters achieve happiness neither in this world nor in the next. Even fools attain some material happiness. Doubters attain none.

When we finally come in contact with the bona fide spiritual master, saintly persons, and scriptures, we have the opportunity to gather knowledge there, live our lives accordingly, and feel our doubts subside. The problem is that as conditioned souls we're so habituated to doubting that we continue to doubt even though our intelligence tells us not to and even though those doubts are to our detriment.

From Śrīla Prabhupāda: "*Asammoha*, freedom from doubt and delusion, can be achieved when one is not hesitant and when he understands the transcendental philosophy. Slowly but surely that person becomes free from bewilderment. Nothing should be accepted blindly; everything should be accepted with care and with caution." (Bg. 10.4–5, Purport)

As mentioned earlier, false ego, the junction of matter and spirit, is the root cause of doubt. Therefore: "As soon as the knot [of *ahaṅkāra*, false ego,] is loosened, all the clouds of doubt are at once cleared off." (*Bhāg.* 1.2.21, Purport)

And: "When one is firmly convinced of Kṛṣṇa's opulences, that person accepts Kṛṣṇa with great faith and without any doubt, and engages in devotional service." (Bg. 10.7, Purport)

To destroy doubt and follow the spiritual path with full faith, hope, and optimism, knowledge is essential. Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that the weapon of knowledge slashes doubts. (Bg. 4.42) With transcendental knowledge and vision we perform devotional service strongly and become free of sin. Because a Kṛṣṇa conscious person is freed from all sins, he has no doubt about the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa. This is the state of divine love. (Bg. 5.25, Purport)

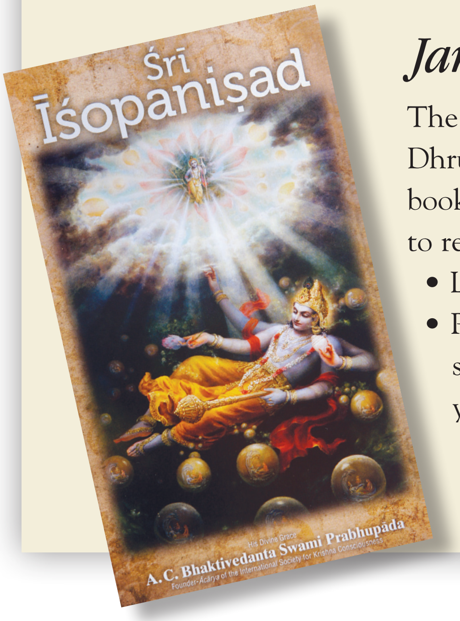
Equally essential is to associate and make friendships with Kṛṣṇa's dear devotees, who themselves are knowledgeable, faithful, and optimistic. Following their precedent and that of all great souls, we worship Kṛṣṇa, serve Him with love, and chant His holy names. Remembering our great heritage and good fortune, we study Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and ask questions of devotees we trust. Such confidential exchanges destroy doubt, as do our patience, enthusiasm, and budding confidence in the process of devotional service. Even the simple act of honoring *prasāda* will give us faith, as will following the principles of dharma, or righteous acts.

By identifying ourselves with God's devotees, serving them, and appreciating them from the core of our hearts, our doubts dissipate. And as we respect life in all its forms, remain spiritually focused, and share Prabhupāda's message with others, we gradually become doubt free.

Freedom from doubts is one aspect of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *prasāda* (mercy). We can pray to him for that *prasāda.* And when we bow before him and observe his example, we will feel our doubts decrease. He's offering us a treasure of divine wealth, and firm faith gifts us that wealth.

Doubts are like demons. Since Kṛṣṇa is expert in killing demons, we can ask Him to kill the demonic doubts that arise in our minds. The spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa demolish doubt with their inestimable mercy.

Viśākhā Devī Dāsī has been contributing articles and photographs to BTG for almost forty years. She and her husband, Yaduvara Dāsa, have lived at Saranagati Village, a Hare Kṛṣṇa community in British Columbia, Canada, since 1999. For more information, visit her website: http://our-spiritual-journey.com.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Bhakti Life

Yamarāja Dāsa

The Seven Wonders of the WORD

What is the effect of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa?

By Śivarāma Swami

THE NAMES OF the Lord in the *mahā-mantra*—Hare, Kṛṣṇa, and Rāma—are invested with His full potencies. Singing God's names, therefore, is to contact Him through the medium of transcendental sound. Thus, the effect of chanting is the same as the effect of directly associating with the Lord. The following beautiful verse, written by Lord Caitanya, describes the seven effects the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* has on chanters.

ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanaṁ
bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇaṁ
śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇaṁ
vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
ānandāmbudhi-vardhanaṁ
prati-padaṁ pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanaṁ
sarvātma-snapanaṁ paraṁ
vijayate śri-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam

"Let there be all victory for the chanting of the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, which can cleanse the mirror of the heart and stop the miseries of the blazing fire of material existence. That chanting is the waxing moon that spreads the white lotus of good fortune for all living entities. It is the life and soul of all education. The chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa expands the blissful ocean of transcendental life. It gives a cooling effect to everyone and enables one to taste full nectar at every step." (*Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka* 1)

Although many books have been written explaining the theological implications of this verse, the following is a simple summary of the seven effects of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa:

(1) The chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name is a purifying agent that cleanses our hearts of envy—the root cause of our descent to this world—and other bad qualities we have since acquired, like lust, greed, and anger.

(2) As it purifies the heart, Kṛṣṇa's name also protects sincere chanters from any further contamination from the worldly energy and those affected by it.

(3) Chanting awakens pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa, the soul's dormant propensity to serve the Lord with love; and further chanting revives the loving devotion that qualifies one for the greatest good fortune—Kṛṣṇa's association.

This article is adapted from the book Chant, *available, along with other books by the author, at www.srsbooks.com.*

(4) A result of acquiring devotion is that devotees become illuminated with spiritual knowledge. Further chanting matures that knowledge into realization, which in time reveals the devotee's original position in one of the five relationships with Kṛṣṇa.

(5) To the degree that the heart is relieved of unwanted habits, we become devoted to Kṛṣṇa; to the degree that devotion is firmly fixed in our heart, we acquire realized knowledge; to the degree that the heart is illumined by both devotion and knowledge, we taste spiritual happiness. In this way the ocean of bliss swells.

(6) Chanting frees conditioned souls of the illusion of identifying themselves with their body and mind and establishes them in the cooling reality that they are eternal spiritual entities.

Hare Kṛṣṇa is *śabda-brahma,* spiritual sound, and not limited to something communicable only from the mouth to the ear.

(7) When devotees finally achieve the perfection of chanting, they taste the full nectar of loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa—a nectar that makes the bliss of liberation seem insignificant.

The Spiritual Sound Vibration

When we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, we are meant to be in contact with Lord Kṛṣṇa and His associates. That is the nature of spiritual sound, which is different from the kind of sound that is only heard. Hare Kṛṣṇa written on a piece of paper is as much a sound as when you speak it. It is *śabda-brahma,* spiritual sound, and it is not limited to something communicable only from the mouth to the ear. The spiritual energy or potency manifests itself in *śabda-brahma*. And because it is spiritual, it doesn't have the restrictions we have here in the material world.

Generally when we speak of sound, it means something we must hear with the ear. And certainly that is also the characteristic of spiritual sound, but it is not limited to that. Material sound is something we generally relate to as being a transmission of information. But Hare Kṛṣṇa is a transcendental sound vibration. If I say some other words, these are material sounds. The difference with the spiritual sound is that it does more than just communicate a message. It contains within it and is empowered with a spiritual potency, and that means it represents the spiritual realm or energies, either in part or whole.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu says, *nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija sarva śaktiḥ:* Kṛṣṇa's holy name has all spiritual potency. When you ask, "How are you?" how much potency is in that sentence? But when you say, "Hare Kṛṣṇa," then everything that exists within the spiritual world is present, compressed within that sound vibration. And that presence is there whether you see it on paper or hear it in your ear.

The spiritual world also exists in the reality of Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports. Śrīla Prabhupāda uses the same words we use. He also asked, "How are you?" but because he's speaking from the spiritual platform, his words are saturated with spiritual potency and therefore have more impact than just a mere question. Aside from posing the question, his words also purify the heart, free one from material contamination, are liberating, and bring about spiritual realizations.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda asked, "How are you?" it was a lot more than just a question. It was not a mere enquiry about well-being. Behind it was the intent of someone coming from the spiritual world to liberate us, to bring us closer to Kṛṣṇa, and that in itself comes across. This is a complex and detailed subject.

Connecting with the Sound

In the *Vedānta-sūtra* it is said that *śabda* liberates us. When we say Hare Kṛṣṇa, all the potency of Godhead is there. It is like being in the presence of the Lord, like reading all the *Vedas,* like seeing the spiritual world, like hearing all of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, like understanding the philosophy—*if* you know how to connect with the sound. That is the challenge: connecting with the *śabda.* Because with any kind of relationship there has to be more than transmission; there has to be reception. If the other person isn't receiving, then the relationship is not working. If the receiver is no good, you don't get the message. All our modern media communication is based on information coming from one side and being received on the other. If the receiver is faulty, the whole thing fails. When someone sends a *kīrtana* to your computer, the file appears as a bunch of squiggles if you don't have the right program to receive it. Similarly, the effects of spiritual sound will be impeded if we're not tuned in.

The challenge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to be proper recipients of spiritual sound. We have ears, and those are the general instruments, but those are not enough. Because *śabda-brahma* is not just sound. *Śabda-brahma* works on the level of consciousness. It is not just a sound vibration, though we use that terminology. You have to have the proper consciousness to connect with that sound vibration. Purification of consciousness needs to come about so that there is no obstruction. When we can hear Hare Kṛṣṇa without offense or interference, then, Śrīla Prabhupāda says, we come directly in contact with God.

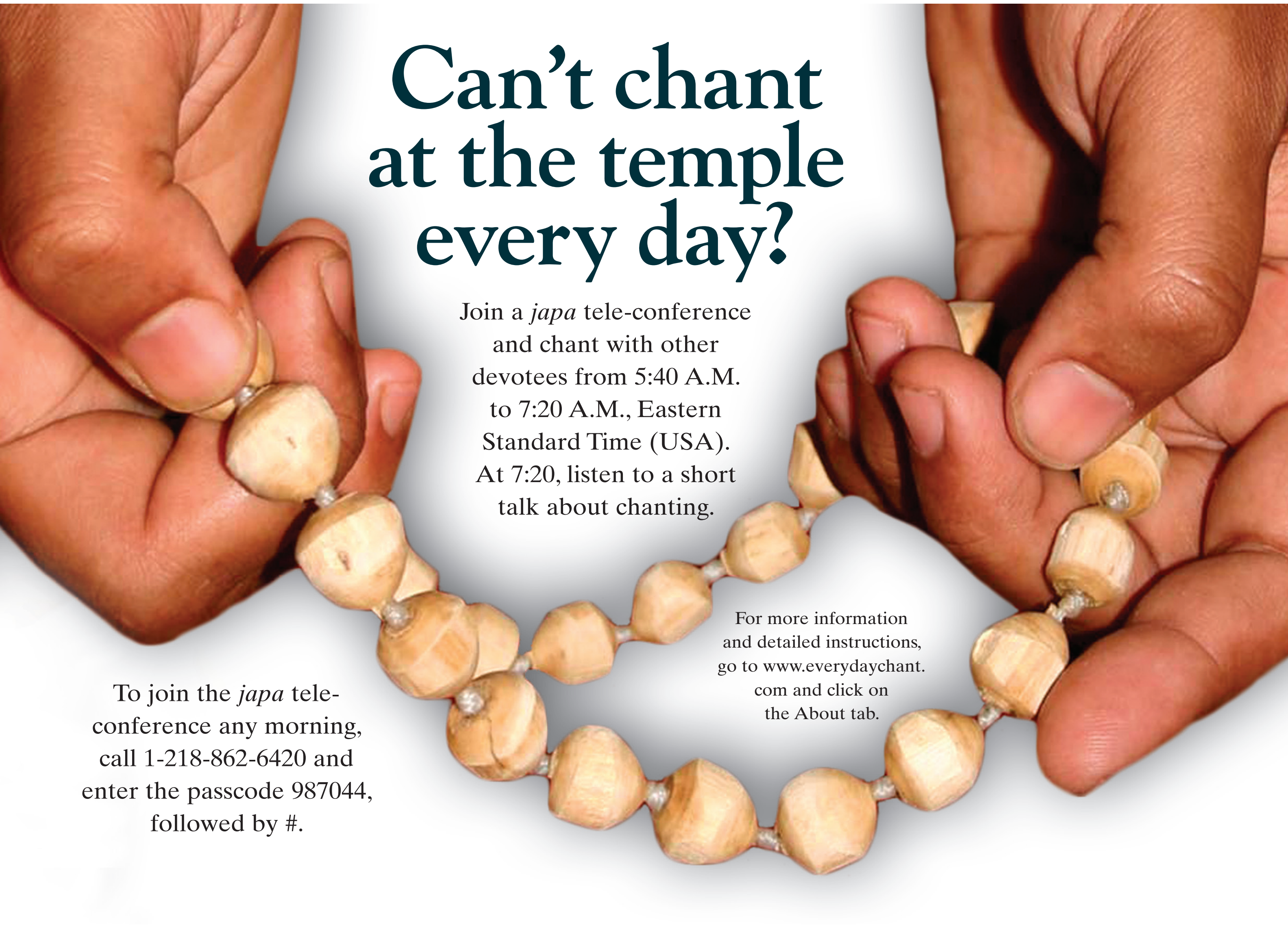
Sometimes people say, "Show me God." This is how to see God: by hearing Hare Kṛṣṇa. But you have to hear it in a certain way, because your consciousness perceives, not your ear. My tongue is speaking, and the sound is going through the microphone. But the microphone isn't hearing anything, because it is not conscious. It is transmitting sound, but it is not hearing. Similarly, my ear is an instrument, but *I* am hearing. The soul is hearing. But if the soul is contaminated, it cannot pick up the message of Hare Kṛṣṇa. It is interfering.

Purification of consciousness is necessary. How is it done? By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Chanting and hearing purify the consciousness more and more until it is completely pure. Then one can recognize that there's no difference between Kṛṣṇa and His name. And then when one says Hare Kṛṣṇa, the whole spiritual world unfolds, because *nija sarva śaktiḥ*—all the potencies of Godhead are present within the sound vibration. Nothing is held back. It is a wonderful experience.

We are practicing. We are trying to purify our consciousness to perfectly hear and chant the holy name of the Lord. Then what happens when we can do that? We continue to chant, because there is nothing more pleasurable. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī expresses the mentality of the perfect chanter: "I do not know how much nectar the two syllables 'Kṛṣ-ṇa' have produced. When the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is chanted, it appears to dance within the mouth. We then desire many, many mouths. When that name enters the holes of the ears, we desire many millions of ears. And when the holy name dances in the courtyard of the heart, it conquers the activities of the mind, and therefore all the senses become inert." (*Vidagdha-mādhava* 1.15)

That is the experience of the transcendentalist. We are getting a taste in our conditioned state, and for transcendentalists the experience is millions of times greater. And the nature of the experience is that it makes you want to have more and more and more. We must keep these points in mind and appreciate the divine nature of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. Despite the fact that we don't have to pay for it, or that we can take it anywhere, or that it is not secret, none of these things diminish its sanctity. We should see what a wonderful thing Hare Kṛṣṇa actually is.

Śivarāma Swami, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is an ISKCON initiating spiritual master and a governing body commissioner for Hungary, Turkey, and Romania. He is the author of several books.



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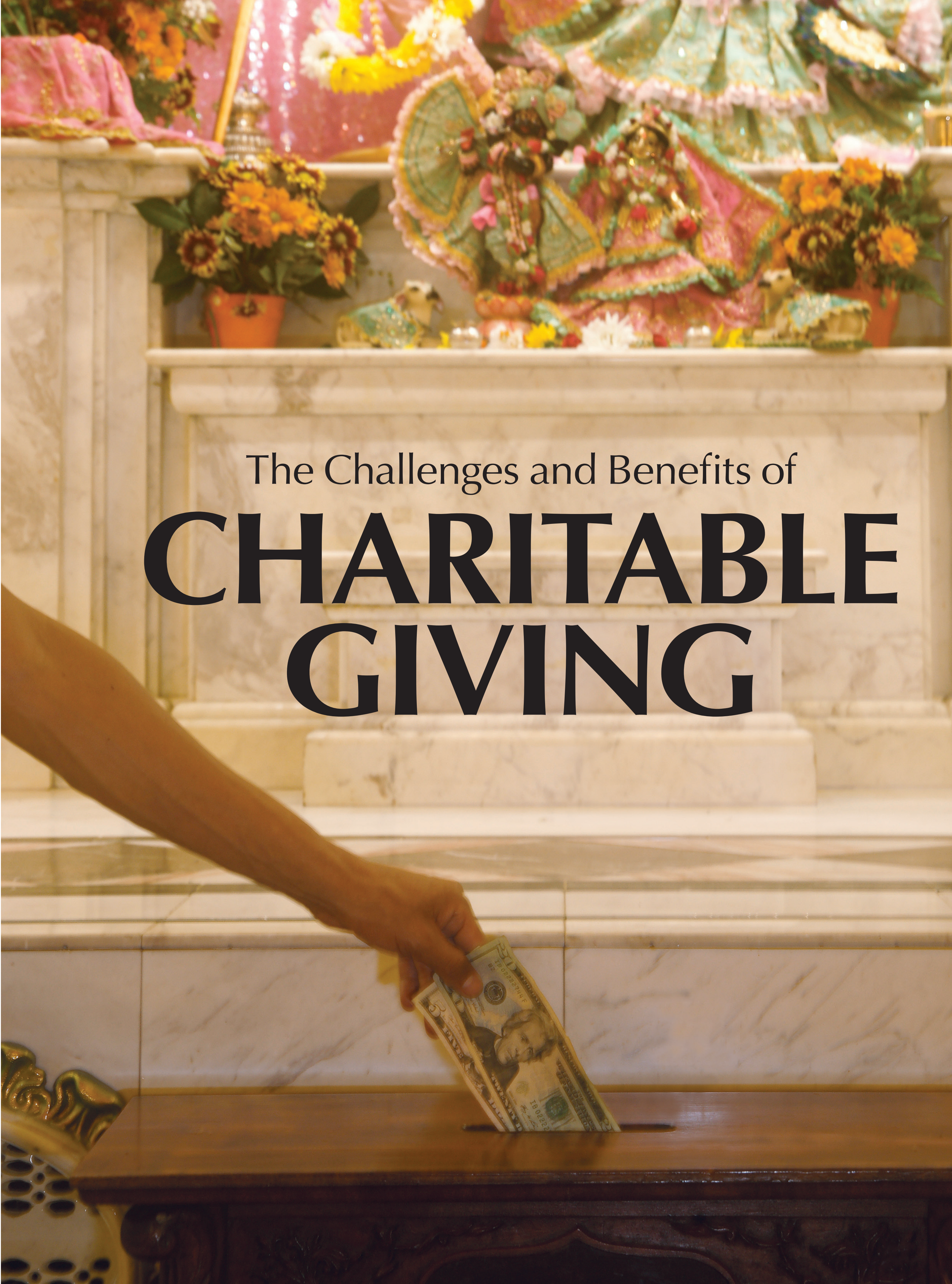


The Challenges and Benefits of

CHARITABLE GIVING

Some thoughts on fulfilling our obligation, given by Kṛṣṇa Himself, to perform acts of charity.

by Kṛṣṇanandinī Devī Dāsī

I HAVE VIVID memories of the many times my mother took my siblings and me to church—the heartfelt gospel singing, the soul-stirring preaching, the supplications for lost souls to join the church. I remember the passing of the baskets to collect money to support the church and its many activities, and I recall well the song that generally accompanied these collections. Its famous, oft-sung lyrics still echo in my mind today: "You can't beat God giving, no matter how you try. The more you give, the more He gives to you. Just keep on giving; you'll find it's really true."

As Vaiṣṇavas, we are instructed to give in charity, because the act of giving assists our spiritual progress in various ways. Especially for householders, or *gṛhasthas,* the injunction to give in charity is a strong one. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "For the *gṛhasthas,* or householders, performance of sacrifices, distribution of charity, and action according to prescribed duties are especially recommended." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.32, Purport)

Sometimes many of us struggle with how, to whom, and even why to give in charity. But just as sincere devotees are committed to eating only food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, they should be committed to regularly giving in charity some portion of their income. In this way, devotees can become examples to others of how to get money honestly and distribute it for the satisfaction of the Lord.

Our giving should be connected to Kṛṣṇa in some way. For example, when we contribute to ISKCON programs, we're supporting Kṛṣṇa's desire that His teachings be spread everywhere. The Supreme Lord is *ātmarāma,* or self-satisfied. He does not need our offerings. He is completely full in Himself and is served by hundreds and thousands of eager, enthusiastic, pure-hearted goddesses of fortune. Yet He instructs us to give in charity to Him. Why? Because it purifies and strengthens us spiritually. Giving in charity to Kṛṣṇa is one way we acknowledge that everything belongs to Him. "If by the grace of the Lord we get such opulences as material wealth, fame, power, education, and beauty, it is our duty to consider that they are all gifts of the Lord and must be used for His service, not our sense enjoyment." (*Kṛṣṇa,* Chapter 81)

The Benefits of Giving in Charity

Giving in charity purifies the heart because it helps us become detached from material things and cleanses the desire for fruitive results. Giving in charity purifies our finances and accumulated wealth. Envision the vast universe as a bank. The charity we give is like a deposit in that bank, the dividends being the purification of our hearts or the unexpected provision of our needs.

Giving in charity allows us to put our money where our heart is. If our heart is in becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious, in supporting Lord Caitanya's mission, in knowing that sincere practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is good for the whole world, then we can show it by how we faithfully and regularly give and do our part to ensure that this mission spreads and is maintained.

The charity we give is like a deposit in the bank of the universe, the dividends being the purification of our hearts.

Finally, giving in charity pleases Kṛṣṇa and increases our faith.

Barriers or Obstacles to Giving

"I just don't have enough money to give in charity" is a refrain we hear often. Sometimes devotees feel they don't have enough income to maintain their families, so why should they give in charity? One reason is that giving charity to the right persons increases our faith. By the simple act of following the instruction to give in charity, we will see how Lord Kṛṣṇa continues to provide for our family.

Frequently, devotees want to do something big for the Lord and wait until they "get in a better position." But the better position may never come. An anonymous person has stated this succinctly for us: "Between the big things we cannot do and the little things we will not do, the danger is that we may never get anything done." Steadiness and dedication in giving charity are more important than giving huge amounts.

Another obstacle may be that the giver doesn't trust the recipients of his or her charity. When I was younger, my grandmother and grandfather (a Baptist minister) emphasized that one should sincerely tithe (give ten percent of one's income) after identifying a worthwhile recipient and then trust God for the results. In other words, God Himself will deal with anyone who misuses charity meant for Him.

Giving in charity may often mean some sacrifice. The Supreme Lord suggests this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.5) when He tells us, "Acts of sacrifice, charity, and penance are not to be given up but should be performed. Indeed, sacrifice, charity, and penance purify even the great souls."

Three Kinds of Charity

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa instructs human beings how to live a peaceful, God-conscious life and then go back home, back to Godhead. He tells Arjuna that all activities fall into three categories, according to the three modes of nature: goodness, passion, and ignorance. Thus, foods are classified as good, passionate, or ignorant, and so are activities such as giving in charity.

To get real spiritual and material benefit, charity should be wisely given. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "In the Vedic literature, charity given to a person engaged in spiritual activities is recommended." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 17.20, Purport)

Arjuna heard from Kṛṣṇa about charity in the three modes:

- Charity in the mode of goodness is given out of duty, at the proper time and place, to a worthy person, and without expectation of return. (Bg. 17.20)
- Charity performed while expecting some return or in a grudging mood is said to be in the mode of passion. (Bg. 17.21)
- Charity performed at an improper place and time and given to unworthy persons, without respect and with contempt, is in the mode of ignorance and yields negative results or consequences. (Bg. 17.22).

The Charity Dilemma

The concept of regularly giving a portion of one's income in charity intimidates many devotees. Although we may know that giving regularly in charity is a goal for which all householders should aspire, still we are sometimes confused about how to apply this principle. Given their financial situation, some devotees can't decide how or when to give in charity.

In *The Nectar of Instruction* we learn that simply following rules and regulations without understanding their purpose or goal can cause falldown. So let's try to grasp the purpose of the charitable principle:

- Everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa; therefore, when we offer something in the service of the Lord, we're just returning the property to its rightful owner.
- Giving—gifts, *prasādam,* money, time, talent—is a way to show love. It is one of the six loving exchanges between devotees. Spiritual life is a culture of giving.
- Giving charity is a sacrifice that purifies one's wealth. If wealth is not purified, it will often be taken through legal fees, medical bills, taxes, theft, and so on.
- Even a little given in the service of God rewards the giver hundreds and thousands of times.
- Śrīla Prabhupāda said that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is creating people who are "independently thoughtful." He wanted us to use our intelligence and creativity in carrying out scriptural instructions in cooperation with other devotees.

(*please turn to page 52*)

BOOK SECTION: ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Referred to as “the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature,” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

DHRUVA MAHĀRĀJA’S PERFECTION

*Endowed with all godly qualities,
Dhruva Mahārāja ruled his citizens like a kindly father
and then renounced everything to attain liberation.*

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 12

12 तमेवं शीलसम्पन्नं ब्रह्मण्यं दीनवत्सलम्
गोप्तारं धर्मसेतूनां मेनिरे पितरं प्रजाः

tam evaṁ śīla-sampannaṁ
brahmaṇyaṁ dīna-vatsalam
goptāraṁ dharma-setūnāṁ
menire pitaraṁ prajāḥ

tam—him; *evam*—thus; *śīla*—with godly qualities; *sampannam*—endowed; *brahmaṇyam*—respectful to the *brāhmaṇas; dīna*—to the poor; *vatsalam*—kind; *goptāram*—protector; *dharma-setūnām*—of religious principles; *menire*—thought; *pitaram*—father; *prajāḥ*—the citizens.

Dhruva Mahārāja was endowed with all godly qualities; ① he was very respectful to the devotees of the Supreme Lord and very kind to the poor and innocent, and he protected religious principles. With all these qualifications, he was considered to be the direct father of all the citizens.

PURPORT: The personal qualities of Dhruva Mahārāja described herein are the exemplary qualities of a saintly king. Not only a king but also the leaders of a modern democratic or impersonal government must be qualified with all these godly characteristics. Then the citizens of the state can be happy. ② It is clearly stated here that the citizens thought of Dhruva Mahārāja as their father; as a child, depending on the able father, is completely satisfied, so the citizens of the state, being protected by the state or the king, should remain satisfied in every respect. At the present moment, however, there is no guarantee by the government of even the primary necessities of life in the state, namely, the protection of the lives and property of the citizens.

One word is very significant in this connection: *brahmaṇyam.* Dhruva Mahārāja was very devoted to the *brāhmaṇas,* who engage in the study of the *Vedas* and thereby know the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They are always busy propagating Kṛṣṇa consciousness. ③ The state should be very respectful to societies that distribute God consciousness all over the world, but, unfortunately,

(1) What were some of the personal qualities of Dhruva Mahārāja?
(2) In what relationship did the citizens see Dhruva Mahārāja?
(3) To what societies should the state be especially respectful?

at the present moment there is no state or government support given to such movements. As for good qualities, it is very difficult to find anyone in state administration with any good qualities. The administrators simply sit in their administrative posts and say no to every request, as if they were paid to say no to the citizens.

Another word, *dīna-vatsalam,* is very significant also. ④ The state head should be very kind to the innocent. Unfortunately, in this age the state agents and the presidents draw good salaries from the state, and they pose themselves as very pious, but they allow the running of slaughterhouses, where innocent animals are killed.

If we try to compare the godly qualities of Dhruva Mahārāja to the qualities of modern statesmen, we can see that there is no actual comparison. ⑤ Dhruva Mahārāja was present in the Satya-yuga, as will be clear from the next verses. He was the ideal king in Satya-yuga. The government administration in the present age (Kali-yuga) is bereft of all godly qualities. Considering all these points, the people today have no alternative but to take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness for protection of religion, life, and property.

13 षट्त्रिंशद्वर्षसाहस्रं शशास क्षितिमण्डलम्
भोगैः पुण्यक्षयं कुर्वन्नभोगैरशुभक्षयम्

ṣaṭ-triṁśad-varṣa-sāhasraṁ
śaśāsa kṣiti-maṇḍalam
bhogaiḥ puṇya-kṣayaṁ kurvann
abhogair aśubha-kṣayam

ṣaṭ-triṁśat—thirty-six; *varṣa*—years; *sāhasram*—thousand; *śaśāsa*—ruled; *kṣiti-maṇḍalam*—the earth planet; *bhogaiḥ*—by enjoyment; *puṇya*—of reactions of pious activities; *kṣayam*—diminution; *kurvan*—doing; *abhogaiḥ*—by austerities; *aśubha*—of inauspicious reactions; *kṣayam*—diminution.

⑥ **Dhruva Mahārāja ruled over this planet for thirty-six thousand years; he diminished the reactions of pious activities by enjoyment, and by practicing austerities he diminished inauspicious reactions.**

PURPORT: That Dhruva Mahārāja ruled over the planet for thirty-six thousand years means that he was present in the Satya-yuga ⑦ because in the Satya-yuga people used to live for one hundred thousand years. In the next *yuga,* Tretā, people used to live for ten thousand years, and in the next *yuga,* Dvāpara, for one thousand years. In the present age, the Kali-yuga, the maximum duration of life is one hundred years.

(4) How do state leaders today show themselves to be unkind to the innocent?
(5) In which age did Dhruva Mahārāja rule?
(6) How long did Dhruva Mahārāja rule?
(7) How long do people live in each of the four *yugas*?
(8) What does it mean that devotional service should be *apratihatā*?
(9) How does one attain perfection in material life?

With the change of the *yugas,* the duration of life and memory, the quality of kindness, and all other good qualities diminish. There are two kinds of activities, namely pious and impious. By executing pious activities one can gain facilities for higher material enjoyment, but due to impious activities one has to undergo severe distress. A devotee, however, is not interested in enjoyment or affected by distress. When he is prosperous he knows, "I am diminishing the results of my pious activities," and when he is in distress he knows, "I am diminishing the reactions of my impious activities." A devotee is not concerned with enjoyment or distress; he simply desires to execute devotional service.

⑧ It is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that devotional service should be *apratihatā,* unchecked by material conditions of happiness or distress. The devotee undergoes processes of austerity such as observing Ekādaśī and similar other fasting days and refraining from illicit sex, intoxication, gambling, and meat-eating. Thus he becomes purified from the reactions of his past impious life, and because he engages in devotional service, which is the most pious activity, he enjoys life without separate endeavor.

14 एवं बहुसवं कालं महात्माविचलेन्द्रियः
त्रिवर्गौपयिकं नीत्वा पुत्रायादान्नृपासनम्

evaṁ bahu-savaṁ kālaṁ
mahātmāvicalendriyaḥ
tri-vargaupayikaṁ nītvā
putrāyādān nṛpāsanam

evam—thus; *bahu*—many; *savam*—years; *kālam*—time; *mahā-ātmā*—great soul; *avicala-indriyaḥ*—without being disturbed by sense agitation; *tri-varga*—three kinds of worldly activities; *aupayikam*—favorable for executing; *nītvā*—having passed; *putrāya*—to his son; *adāt*—he handed over; *nṛpa-āsanam*—the royal throne.

The self-controlled great soul Dhruva Mahārāja thus passed many, many years favorably executing three kinds of worldly activities, namely religiosity, economic development, and satisfaction of all material desires. Thereafter he handed over the charge of the royal throne to his son.

PURPORT: ⑨ Perfection of materialistic life is suitably attained by the process of observing religious principles. This leads automatically to successful economic development, and thus there is no difficulty in satisfying all material desires. Since Dhruva Mahārāja, as a king, had to keep up his status quo or it would not have been possible to rule over the people in general, he did it perfectly. But as soon as he saw that his son was grown up and could take charge of the royal throne, he immediately handed over the charge and retired from all material engagements.

One word used here is very significant—*avicalendriyaḥ,* which means that he was not disturbed by the agitation of the senses nor was his sensory power diminished, although in years he was a very old man. Since he ruled over the world for thirty-six thousand years, naturally one may conclude that he became very, very old, but factually his senses were very young—and yet he was not interested in sense gratification. In other words, he remained self-controlled. He performed his duties perfectly according to the materialistic way.

That is the way of behavior of great devotees. Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, one of the direct disciples of Lord Caitanya, was the son of a very rich man. Although he had no interest in enjoying material happiness, when he was entrusted with doing something in managing the state, he did it perfectly. ⑩ Śrīla Gaurasundara advised him, "From within, keep yourself and your mind completely aloof, but externally execute the material duties just as they need to be done." This transcendental position can be achieved by devotees only, as described in the *Bhagavad-gītā:* while others, such as yogis, try to control their senses by force, devotees, even though possessing full sensory powers, do not use them because they engage in higher, transcendental activities.

15 मन्यमान इदं विश्वं मायारचितमात्मनि
अविद्यारचितस्वप्नगन्धर्वनगरोपमम्

manyamāna idaṁ viśvaṁ
māyā-racitam ātmani
avidyā-racita-svapna-
gandharva-nagaropamam

manyamānaḥ—realizing; *idam*—this; *viśvam*—universe; *māyā*—by the external energy; *racitam*—manufactured; *ātmani*—unto the living entity; *avidyā*—by illusion; *racita*—manufactured; *svapna*—a dream; *gandharva-nagara*—phantasmagoria; *upamam*—like.

Śrīla Dhruva Mahārāja realized that this cosmic manifestation bewilders living entities like a dream or phantasmagoria because it is a creation of the illusory, external energy of the Supreme Lord.

PURPORT: In the deep forest it sometimes appears that there are big palaces and nice cities. That is technically called *gandharva-nagara.* Similarly, in dreams also we create many false things out of imagination. A self-realized person, or a devotee, knows well that this material cosmic manifestation is a temporary, illusory representation appearing to be truth. It is like a phantasmagoria. But behind this shadow creation there is reality—the spiritual world. A devotee is interested in the spiritual world, not its shadow. Since he has realization of the supreme truth, a devotee is not interested in this temporary shadow of truth. This is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (*paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate*).

16 आत्मस्त्र्यपत्यसुहृदो बलमृद्धकोश-
मन्तः पुरं परिविहारभुवश्च रम्याः
भूमण्डलं जलधिमेखलमाकलय्य
कालोपसृष्टमिति स प्रययौ विशालाम्

ātma-stry-apatya-suhṛdo balam ṛddha-kośam
antaḥ-puraṁ parivihāra-bhuvaś ca ramyāḥ
bhū-maṇḍalaṁ jaladhi-mekhalam ākalayya
kālopasṛṣṭam iti sa prayayau viśālām

ātma—body; *strī*—wives; *apatya*—children; *suhṛdaḥ*—friends; *balam*—influence, army; *ṛddha-kośam*—rich treasury; *antaḥ-puram*—female residential quarters; *parivihāra-bhuvaḥ*—pleasure-grounds; *ca*—and; *ramyāḥ*—beautiful; *bhū-maṇḍalam*—the complete earth; *jaladhi*—by oceans; *mekhalam*—bound; *ākalayya*—considering; *kāla*—by time; *upasṛṣṭam*—created; *iti*—thus; *saḥ*—he; *prayayau*—went; *viśālām*—to Badarikāśrama.

Thus Dhruva Mahārāja, at the end, left his kingdom, which extended all over the earth and was bounded by the great oceans. He considered his body, his wives, his children, his friends, his army, his rich treasury, his very comfortable palaces, and his many enjoyable pleasure-grounds to be creations of the illusory energy. Thus in due course of time he retired to the forest in the Himalayas known as Badarikāśrama.

PURPORT: In the beginning of his life, when he went to the forest in search of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Dhruva Mahārāja realized that all bodily conceptions of pleasure are products of the illusory energy. In the very beginning, of course, he was after the kingdom of his father, and in order to get it he went to search for the Supreme Lord. But he later realized that everything is the creation of the illusory energy. From the acts of Śrīla Dhruva Mahārāja we can understand that somehow or other if one becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious—it does not matter what his motivation is in the beginning—he will eventually realize the real truth by the grace of the Lord. In the beginning, Dhruva Mahārāja was interested in the kingdom of his father, but later he became a great devotee, *mahā-bhāgavata,* and had no interest in material enjoyment. The perfection of life can be achieved only by devotees. Even if one completes only a minute percentage of devotional service and then

(10) What advice regarding material life did Lord Caitanya give to Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī?

falls down from his immature position, he is better than a person who fully engages in the fruitive activities of this material world.

17 तस्यां विशुद्धकरणः शिववार्विगाह्य
बद्ध्वासनं जितमरुन्मनसाहृताक्षः
स्थूले दधार भगवत्प्रतिरूप एतद्
ध्यायंस्तदव्यवहितो व्यसृजत्समाधौ

tasyāṁ viśuddha-karaṇaḥ śiva-vār vigāhya
baddhvāsanaṁ jita-marun manasāhṛtākṣaḥ
sthūle dadhāra bhagavat-pratirūpa etad
dhyāyaṁs tad avyavahito vyasṛjat samādhau

tasyām—in Badarikāśrama; *viśuddha*—purified; *karaṇaḥ*—his senses; *śiva*—pure; *vāḥ*—water; *vigāhya*—bathing in; *baddhvā*—having fixed; *āsanam*—sitting position; *jita*—controlled; *marut*—breathing process; *manasā*—by the mind; *āhṛta*—withdrawn; *akṣaḥ*—his senses; *sthūle*—physical; *dadhāra*—he concentrated; *bhagavat-pratirūpe*—on the exact form of the Lord; *etat*—the mind; *dhyāyan*—meditating upon; *tat*—that; *avyavahitaḥ*—without stopping; *vyasṛjat*—he entered; *samādhau*—into trance.

In Badarikāśrama Dhruva Mahārāja's senses became completely purified because he bathed regularly in the crystal-clear purified water. He fixed his sitting position and by yogic practice controlled the breathing process and the air of life; in this way his senses were completely withdrawn. Then he concentrated his mind on the arcā-vigraha form of the Lord, which is the exact replica of the Lord and, thus meditating upon Him, entered into complete trance.

PURPORT: Here is a description of the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* system, to which Dhruva Mahārāja was already accustomed. *Aṣṭāṅga-yoga* was never meant to be practiced in a fashionable city. Dhruva Mahārāja went to Badarikāśrama, and in a solitary place, alone, he practiced yoga. He concentrated his mind on the *arcā-vigraha,* the worshipable Deity of the Lord, which exactly represents the Supreme Lord, and thus thinking constantly of that Deity, he became absorbed in trance.

Worship of the *arcā-vigraha* is not idol worship. The *arcā-vigraha* is an incarnation of the Lord in a form appreciable by a devotee. Therefore devotees engage in the temple in the service of the Lord as *arcā-vigraha,* a form made of *sthūla* (material) objects such as stone, metal, wood, jewels, or paint. All of these are called *sthūla,* or physical representations. Since the devotees follow the regulative principles of worship, even though the Lord is there in His physical form, He is nondifferent from His original, spiritual form. Thus the devotee gets the benefit of achieving the ultimate goal of life, that is to say, becoming always absorbed in thought of the Lord. ⑪ This incessant thought of the Lord, as prescribed in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* makes one the topmost yogi.

(11) According to the *Bhagavad-gītā,* what makes one a topmost yogi?
(12) What is the Sanskrit term for a devotee's eight ecstatic bodily transformations?

18 भक्तिं हरौ भगवति प्रवहन्नजस्र-
मानन्दबाष्पकलया मुहुरर्द्यमानः
विक्लिद्यमानहृदयः पुलकाचिताङ्गो
नात्मानमस्मरदसाविति मुक्तलिङ्गः

bhaktiṁ harau bhagavati pravahann ajasram
ānanda-bāṣpa-kalayā muhur ardyamānaḥ
viklidyamāna-hṛdayaḥ pulakācitāṅgo
nātmānam asmarad asāv iti mukta-liṅgaḥ

bhaktim—devotional service; *harau*—unto Hari; *bhagavati*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *pravahan*—constantly engaging in; *ajasram*—always; *ānanda*—blissful; *bāṣpa-kalayā*—by a stream of tears; *muhuḥ*—again and again; *ardyamānaḥ*—being overcome; *viklidyamāna*—melting; *hṛdayaḥ*—his heart; *pulaka*—standing of hairs; *ācita*—covered; *aṅgaḥ*—his body; *na*—not; *ātmānam*—body; *asmarat*—he remembered; *asau*—he; *iti*—thus; *mukta-liṅgaḥ*—free from the subtle body.

Because of his transcendental bliss, incessant tears flowed from his eyes, his heart melted, and there was shivering and standing of the hairs all over his body. Thus transformed, in a trance of devotional service, Dhruva Mahārāja completely forgot his bodily existence, and thus he immediately became liberated from material bondage.

PURPORT: Due to constant engagement in devotional service—hearing, chanting, remembering, worshiping the Deity, etc., as prescribed in nine varieties—there are different symptoms which appear in the body of a devotee. ⑫ These eight bodily transformations, which indicate that a devotee is already liberated within himself, are called *aṣṭa-sāttvika-vikāra.*

When a devotee completely forgets his bodily existence, he should be understood to be liberated. He is no longer encaged in the body. The example is given that when a coconut becomes completely dry, the coconut pulp within the coconut shell separates from the bondage of the shell and the outer covering. By moving the dry coconut, one can hear that the pulp within is no longer attached to the shell or to the covering. Similarly, when one is fully absorbed in devotional service, he is completely disconnected from the two material coverings, the subtle and gross bodies.

[*Continued in the next issue.*]

The Artist Behind the Creation

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and a guest took place in August 1973 at the Hare Kṛṣṇa center in London.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Modern scientists say there is no brain behind the creation. How foolish they are. If we see a painting, we would not say, "There is no brain behind this artistic work. It is so wonderfully painted, yet it has been created automatically. There is no artist." This is foolishness.

But the scientists say that there is no artist behind the creation of a beautiful flower. Without a brain behind it, how could such a thing come into existence? But these rascal scientists do not understand. They say nature produces the flower. What is nature? Nature is an instrument, but the brain behind nature is God.

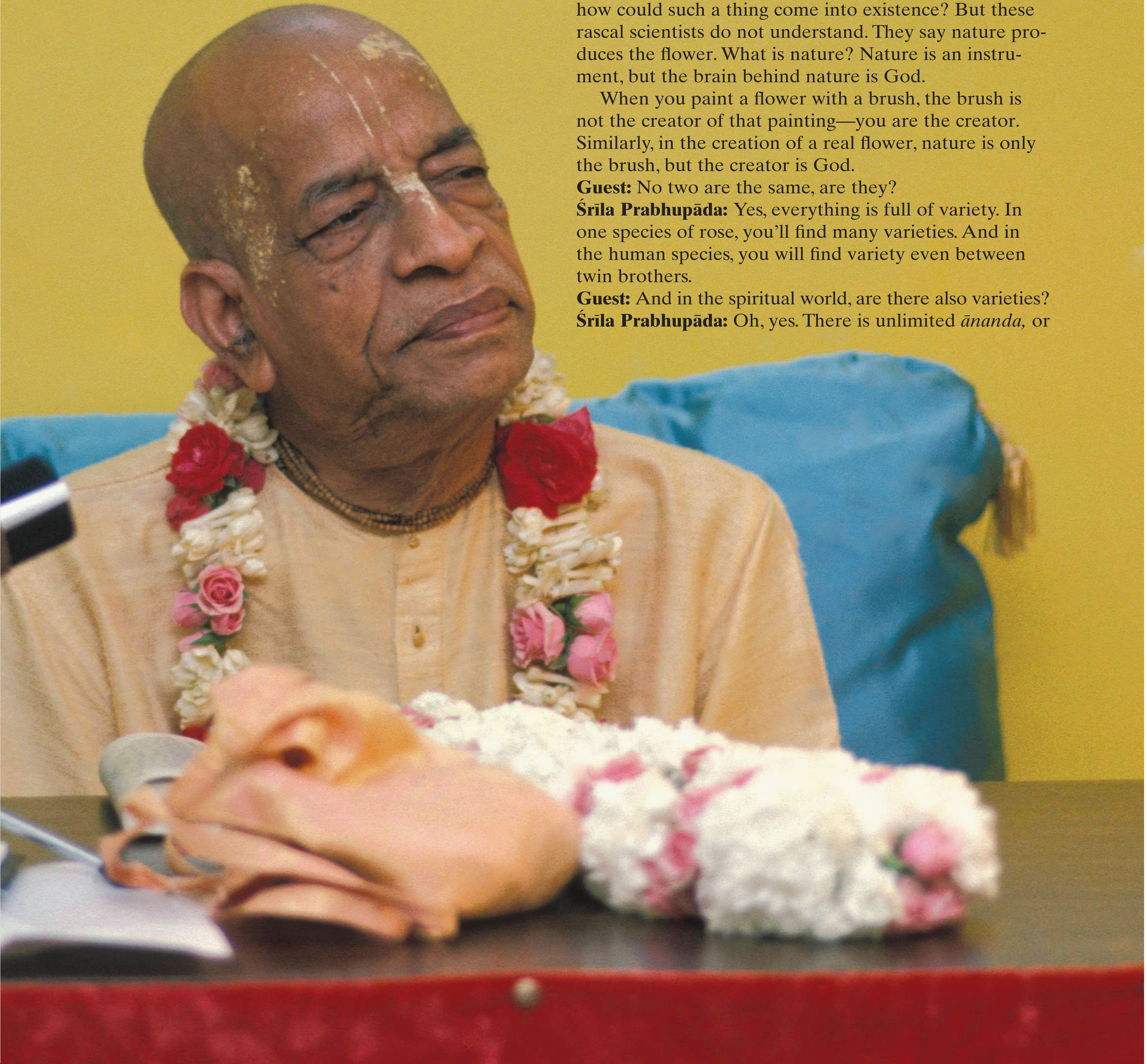
When you paint a flower with a brush, the brush is not the creator of that painting—you are the creator. Similarly, in the creation of a real flower, nature is only the brush, but the creator is God.

Guest: No two are the same, are they?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes, everything is full of variety. In one species of rose, you'll find many varieties. And in the human species, you will find variety even between twin brothers.

Guest: And in the spiritual world, are there also varieties?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Oh, yes. There is unlimited *ānanda,* or



pleasure, and pleasure means variety. "Variety is the mother of enjoyment." For example, from grain, sugar, and ghee [clarified butter] we can prepare hundreds of varieties of delicious foods. If you simply try to eat plain ghee, sugar, and grain, they will not be enjoyable, but if someone takes them and prepares varieties of sweets and then gives them to you upon a plate, you'll say, "Oh, these are so nice." Such a great variety of foods can be prepared from these three ingredients.

Similarly, the varieties of things in this material world are made from eight basic ingredients, namely five gross elements and three subtle elements. Earth, water, fire, air, and ether are the gross elements, and mind, intelligence, and ego are the finer elements. This material world is simply a combination of these eight elements.

Now, just as it takes a person with a brain to combine ingredients in this world, the whole creation must also have a big brain behind it. For example, we use earth, water, and fire to make this building, this table, this chair, vase, harmonium, book—so many things. The ingredients are the same, but our brain decides how to assemble them into many varieties of objects. Similarly, this material cosmic manifestation is full of varieties, and the brain behind it is Lord Kṛṣṇa. That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.10]:

mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ
sūyate sa-carācaram
hetunānena kaunteya
jagad viparivartate

[*To a disciple*]: Read the translation.

Devotee: "This material nature is working under My direction, O son of Kuntī, and it is producing all moving and unmoving beings. By its rule this manifestation is created and annihilated again and again."

Guest: Would you say modern science is only materialism, Prabhupāda?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. The scientists are dealing only with earth, water, fire, air, and ether. That's all. It's all materialism. They do not know what spiritualism is.

Guest: What makes the scientists do their work? What motivates them?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: It is the soul. The soul is a living being with minute independence. He desires to work in a certain way, and nature supplies him with the facility. For example, earth is not man's creation. Earth is God's creation, a product of God's energy. But we use the earth and mold it into various forms—pots, dolls, books, and so on. The ingredients are supplied by God, or by nature, which is God's energy, and we simply transform them. We cannot actually produce anything. So, like God, we have creative energy, although in very minute quantity. Just as God creates the whole universe by His intelligence, we use our intelligence to create this table, this pillow, this harmonium out of God's energy. That's all.

Kṛṣṇa explains all of these things in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. It contains perfect information of everything. One has to study it carefully, that's all. And you can consider the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā* with your good logic. For example, Kṛṣṇa says, "The material elements are My energy." Now, consider the Atlantic Ocean, a vast body of water. It is created by God's energy. Do you accept that? If you hesitate, what is your reason?

Guest: Well, one man says one thing, and another man says another thing. So many people have different things to say.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But it is a question of logic. From your body, water is produced, is it not?

Guest: Yes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Urine is coming, perspiration is coming. These waters are produced by the energy within your body. So why can the vast waters of the Atlantic Ocean not be produced from God's energy?

Guest: Yes, truly they could.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Because God is unlimited, He has unlimited energy. I have limited energy, so I can produce, say, one pound of urine or one ounce of perspiration. But if God likes, He can produce an unlimited quantity of water. Why only one Atlantic Ocean? He can produce many millions of Atlantic Oceans. What is the difficulty in understanding this? ❀

LOOKING FOR NEWS OF THE HARE KṚṢṆA MOVEMENT?

Log on to www.news.iskcon.com

The Internet is the ideal place for timely news, and iskcon.com, run by ISKCON Communications, maintains an active news page. So whether you want to see what's happening in ISKCON or have some news to report, log on to www.news.iskcon.com.

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Quantum physics and God

Toronto's Festival of India in Photos

MADHAVA SMULLEN. PHOTOS BY BRIAN BATISTA BETTENCOURT | This year, celebrating its 40th anniversary, Festival of India hosted a series of public events, with more unique features than ever. ISKCON News takes a look at some of those highlights in photos.

D.C. Gardener Encourages City Temples to Go Green

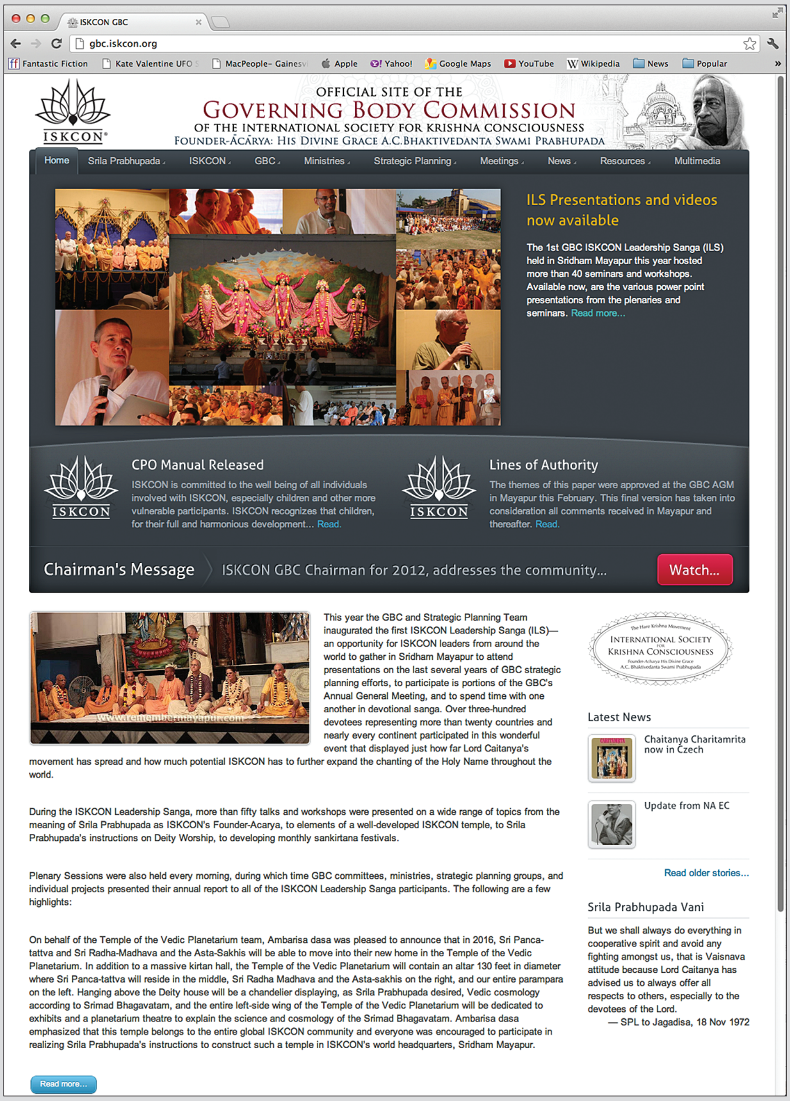
MADHAVA SMULLEN | As environmentally-friendly living becomes more and more of a concern in a modern society where Earth's resources are fast running out, ISKCON has an increasing responsibility to set a good example.

ISKCON Invited for EU Commission President Meeting

KUMARI KUNTI SHERREITT | This year the Hindu Forum of Europe's (HFE) President Bharti Tailor with General Secretary Mahaprabhu Das (also the Director of ISKCON Communications Europe) represented the Hindu faith for this important meeting.

e-Krishna

Profiles of Kṛṣṇa-related websites



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FOUNDER-ĀCĀRYA: HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C.BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA

ILS Presentations and videos now available

The 1st GBC ISKCON Leadership Sanga (ILS) held in Sridham Mayapur this year hosted more than 40 seminars and workshops. Available now, are the various power point presentations from the plenaries and seminars. Read more...

CPO Manual Released

ISKCON is committed to the well being of all individuals involved with ISKCON, especially children and other more vulnerable participants. ISKCON recognizes that children, for their full and harmonious development... Read.

Lines of Authority

The themes of this paper were approved at the GBC AGM in Mayapur this February. This final version has taken into consideration all comments received in Mayapur and thereafter. Read.

Chairman's Message ISKCON GBC Chairman for 2012, addresses the community...

This year the GBC and Strategic Planning Team inaugurated the first ISKCON Leadership Sanga (ILS)—an opportunity for ISKCON leaders from around the world to gather in Sridham Mayapur to attend presentations on the last several years of GBC strategic planning efforts, to participate is portions of the GBC's Annual General Meeting, and to spend time with one another in devotional sanga. Over three-hundred devotees representing more than twenty countries and nearly every continent participated in this wonderful event that displayed just how far Lord Caitanya's movement has spread and how much potential ISKCON has to further expand the chanting of the Holy Name throughout the world.

During the ISKCON Leadership Sanga, more than fifty talks and workshops were presented on a wide range of topics from the meaning of Srila Prabhupada as ISKCON's Founder-Acarya, to elements of a well-developed ISKCON temple, to Srila Prabhupada's instructions on Deity Worship, to developing monthly sankirtana festivals.

Plenary Sessions were also held every morning, during which time GBC committees, ministries, strategic planning groups, and individual projects presented their annual report to all of the ISKCON Leadership Sanga participants. The following are a few highlights:

On behalf of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium team, Ambarisa dasa was pleased to announce that in 2016, Sri Panca-tattva and Sri Radha-Madhava and the Asta-Sakhis will be able to move into their new home in the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium. In addition to a massive kirtan hall, the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium will contain an altar 130 feet in diameter where Sri Panca-tattva will reside in the middle, Sri Radha Madhava and the Asta-sakhis on the right, and our entire parampara on the left. Hanging above the Deity house will be a chandelier displaying, as Srila Prabhupada desired, Vedic cosmology according to Srimad Bhagavatam, and the entire left-side wing of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium will be dedicated to exhibits and a planetarium theatre to explain the science and cosmology of the Srimad Bhagavatam. Ambarisa dasa emphasized that this temple belongs to the entire global ISKCON community and everyone was encouraged to participate in realizing Srila Prabhupada's instructions to construct such a temple in ISKCON's world headquarters, Sridham Mayapur.

Latest News

Chaitanya Charitamrita now in Czech

Update from NA EC

Srila Prabhupada Vani

But we shall always do everything in cooperative spirit and avoid any fighting amongst us, that is Vaisnava attitude because Lord Caitanya has advised us to always offer all respects to others, especially to the devotees of the Lord.
— SPL to Jagadisa, 18 Nov 1972

www.gbc.iskcon.org is the official website for the ISKCON Governing Body Commission. The website was launched during the ISKCON Leadership Sanga (ILS) held in Mayapur, India, last February.

The first thing on the menu bar, next to the Home button, is a biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda and a list of his books. The rest of the site includes many features to help familiarize everyone with the members of the GBC and the work they are involved in.

By clicking on the GBC tab, you will find a description of the GBC, the governance structure under which it works, and a profile of each GBC member. Under this tab you can also read about Śrīla Prabhupāda's vision for the GBC and browse through a list of frequently asked questions.

The Ministries tab takes you to a description of each of the ministries appointed by the GBC, such as the Deity Worship Ministry, the Book Distribution Ministry, and the Cow Protection and Agriculture Ministry. Here you can find information about each minister and his or her activities and read about the various GBC subcommittees, such as the Kirtan Standards Committee. These committees make recommendations to the GBC on a wide range of issues.

Click on Strategic Planning to read about the Strategic Planning team and the work they do in developing practical strategies for implementing the vision and decisions of the GBC. You can meet the team members and read the strategies and initiatives they work on.

You will find reports on GBC meetings by clicking on the Meetings tab.

The Resources tab leads you to a variety of papers, Powerpoint presentations, and video downloads. You can read all the GBC resolutions going back to 1975, download papers on topics such as *kīrtana* standards and lines of authority, and watch presentations from the ISKCON Leadership Sanga as well as video interviews with devotees who attended.

Under the Multimedia tab you will find photographs from various GBC events.

The site makes it easier to understand the GBC and what it does. It provides a central place to keep up to date with its latest activities. If you click on the Contact link at the bottom of the page, you can send your own questions to the GBC Community Relations Director.

—*Antony Brennan*

KṚṢṆA

The Purest Of the Pure

Why we should surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

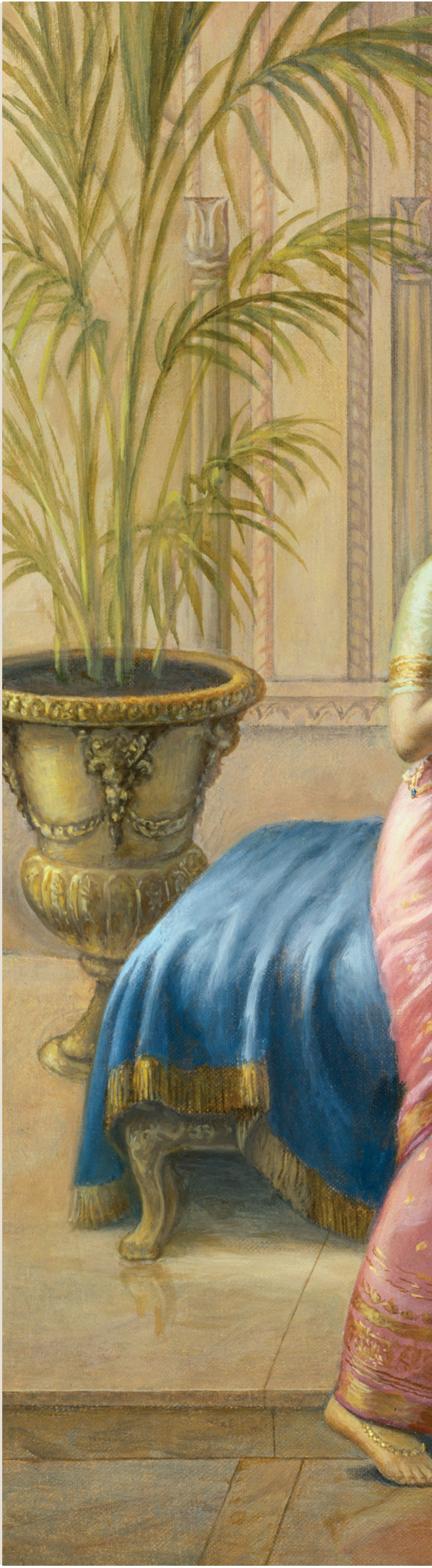
By Rāsa Puruṣa Dāsa

AT THE JUNCTION of two ages, amidst two immense armies arrayed on the battlefield at Kurukshetra, Arjuna scans his foes and becomes confused. When Kṛṣṇa expounds eternal dharma to enlighten him, Arjuna addresses Kṛṣṇa as *pavitraṁ paramam*: "the purest of the pure." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.12) Arjuna adds, "All the great sages . . . confirm this about You, and now You Yourself are declaring it to me."

Apart from the *Bhagavad-gītā,* other books of wisdom are the *Upaniṣads,* essential Vedic texts that saints and sages have piously guarded against both extinction and mutilation. The eighth verse of *Śrī Īśopaniṣad,* the topmost *Upaniṣad,* states that Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is *śuddham* and *apāpa-viddham*. Commenting on this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains:

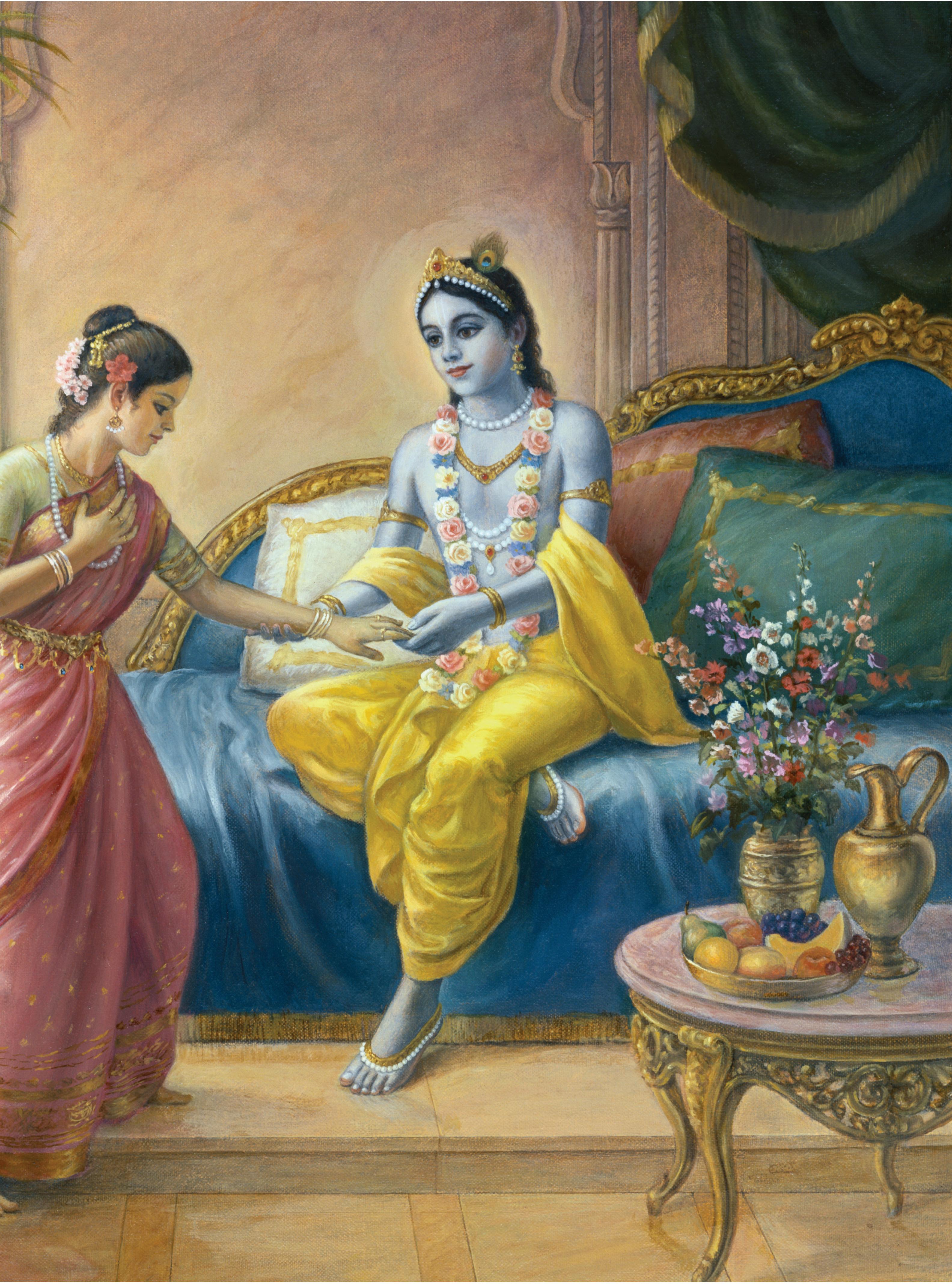
> To confirm that the Lord is always pure and uncontaminated, *Śrī Īśopaniṣad* describes him as *śuddham* (antiseptic) and *apāpa-viddham* (prophylactic). He is antiseptic in the sense that even an impure thing can become purified just by touching Him. The word "prophylactic" refers to the power of His association. . . . The Lord is also *apāpa-viddham* because sin cannot touch Him. Even if He acts in a way that appears to be sinful, such actions are all good, for there is no question of His being affected by sin. Because in all circumstances He is *śuddham*, most purified, He is often compared to the sun.

Besides the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Upaniṣads,* other prominent scriptures derive their inspiration and authority from the *Vedas.* One such scripture, named *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* was compiled by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, a principal disciple of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. It details sixty-four transcendental qualities that are fully and



Lord Kṛṣṇa meets with Trivakrā (Kubja), whom He has transformed from a hunchback into a beautiful woman.

Painting by Rāmaprasāda Dāsa



eternally manifest in Lord Kṛṣṇa. One of the most prominent listed therein is purity. In Śrīla Prabhupāda's summary study of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,* titled *The Nectar of Devotion,* he writes, "There are two kinds of supreme purity. When one type is possessed, one is able to deliver a sinful person. When the other type is possessed, one does not do anything which is impure. A person who possesses either of these qualities is called supremely pure. Kṛṣṇa is both; He can deliver all sinful conditioned souls, and at the same time, He never does anything by which He can be contaminated."

Not only is Kṛṣṇa supremely pure and supremely purifying, but He is also a benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, as stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.29). Endowed with these super-excellent qualities, Kṛṣṇa during His earthly sojourn some five thousand years ago absolved many contaminated beings of their sinful reactions just by touching them. Here are three examples:

The Hunchbacked Woman

While exploring Mathura, Kṛṣṇa encountered Trivakrā, a young hunchbacked maidservant of Kaṁsa, king of Mathura. She was carrying a tray of fine ointments. Kṛṣṇa jokingly addressed her as "My dear lady" and "O you of beautiful thighs" and asked for some of her finest ointments. Enchanted by Kṛṣṇa's beauty and joking words, she gave Him a liberal dose of ointments. Pleased by her service, Kṛṣṇa stepped on her toes with His lotus feet, took hold of her chin, and straightened her spine. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.42.8) relates: "Simply by Lord Mukunda's touch, Trivakrā was suddenly transformed into an exquisitely beautiful woman with straight, evenly proportioned limbs, and large hips and breasts."

The Snake

One day Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa's father, went to Ambika Forest along with other cowherd men and Kṛṣṇa. After bathing in a river and worshiping Lord Śiva and his consort, Goddess Ambikā, they decided to spend the night in the forest. As they slept, a great hungry serpent appeared and slithered up to Nanda Mahārāja to swallow him. Distressed, Nanda cried for help. The cowherd men awoke and beat the serpent with wooden torches, but it would not relent. Kṛṣṇa then came to the spot and touched the serpent with His lotus feet. "The snake had all his sinful reactions destroyed by the touch of the Supreme Lord's divine foot, and thus he gave up his serpent body and appeared in the form of a worshipable Vidyādhara." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.34.9)

Proud of his beauty, the Vidyādhara, a kind of demigod, had ridiculed a group of sages. Because of this sin, they made him assume the lowly form of a snake.

The Lizard

Sāmba and other sons of Kṛṣṇa once went to the forest to play. When they were through with their game, they felt thirsty and searched for water. When they looked inside a dry well, they saw an amazing creature: a huge lizard resembling a hill. Concerned with its piteous plight, they tried to pull it out with cords and ropes but failed to rescue the entrapped creature.

They then went to Kṛṣṇa and excitedly told Him what had happened. Lord Kṛṣṇa accompanied them to the well, extended His left hand, and lifted the lizard out. "Touched by the hand of the glorious Supreme Lord, the being at once gave up its lizard form and assumed that of a resident of heaven. His complexion was beautifully colored like molten gold, and he was adorned with wonderful ornaments, clothes, and garlands." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.64.6).

The divine being happened to be King Nṛga. He was famous for his charitable traits but had inadvertently incurred a sin by donating the same cow to two *brāhmaṇas.*

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Purity Levels in Living Entities

Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.7), *mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*: "The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts." As parts of Kṛṣṇa, the living entities (souls) have a portion of His quality of supreme purity. Thus every living entity is potentially pure, eternally. The constitutional position of the living entity is to be the eternal servitor of Kṛṣṇa. But when the living entity forgets his constitutional obligation and associates with the illusory energy (*māyā*) under the influence of false ego, he becomes entangled in material activity. All material activities, good or bad, have their reactions, and any reaction binds the performer. By indulging in material sense gratification, the living entity is subject to sinful reactions that blemish his original purity. The impure living entity suffers the miseries of material life, namely birth, death, old age, and disease in this ephemeral world.

Surrender to Kṛṣṇa's Lotus Feet

How can we contact Kṛṣṇa to secure freedom from sinful reactions and redemption from impurity? The method is very simple: just surrender to Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15), *sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭaḥ:* "I am seated in everyone's heart." When a living entity of impaired purity completely surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, Kṛṣṇa, situated in the heart as a witness (Supersoul), by His causeless mercy contacts the living entity, burns up all his sinful reactions, and restores his vitiated purity and his original splendor.

Recovery from vitiated purity to original purity is called purification. The living entity so purified does not err. He disengages himself from material sense gratification, focuses his senses on Kṛṣṇa, and works only for Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction. The work done for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa is not susceptible to any reaction and does not cause any bondage. Thus a purified living entity becomes liberated even while living in the material world. When he sheds his body at the time of death and attains Kṛṣṇa's abode in the spiritual world, he gets a spiritual body. With spiritual eyes he can see Kṛṣṇa face to face and becomes one of His associates, eligible to share His opulences. He is then designated "eternally liberated" and never returns to the material world.

Surrender to Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet is the panacea for all the ills of the material world. Lord Kṛṣṇa elaborately describes various kinds of knowledge and processes of religion during His immortal discourse, the *Bhagavad-gītā.* He then summarizes the entire *Gītā* in one verse (18.66): "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear." Similarly, during His immortal discourse with Uddhava (*Uddhava-gītā*) in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* the Lord assures us in verse 11.29.34, "A person who gives up all his fruitive activities and offers himself entirely unto Me, eagerly desiring to render service unto Me, achieves liberation from birth and death and is promoted to the status of sharing my own opulences."

Śrīla Prabhupāda concludes in his purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 15.6, "That supreme abode [of Kṛṣṇa] can be achieved by surrender and by no other means." We should unhesitatingly accept Kṛṣṇa, the supreme purifier (*śuddham),* as the supreme savior of all living entities. We should unreservedly surrender unto His lotus feet and attain the ultimate and supreme goal of human life—to go back home, back to Godhead.

Rāsa Puruṣa Dāsa, a disciple of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, is a chartered civil engineer retired from the government of Haryana. Now living in Mumbai, in the late sixties and seventies he was instrumental in the design and construction of the latest sacred Brahma Sarovar at Kurukshetra.

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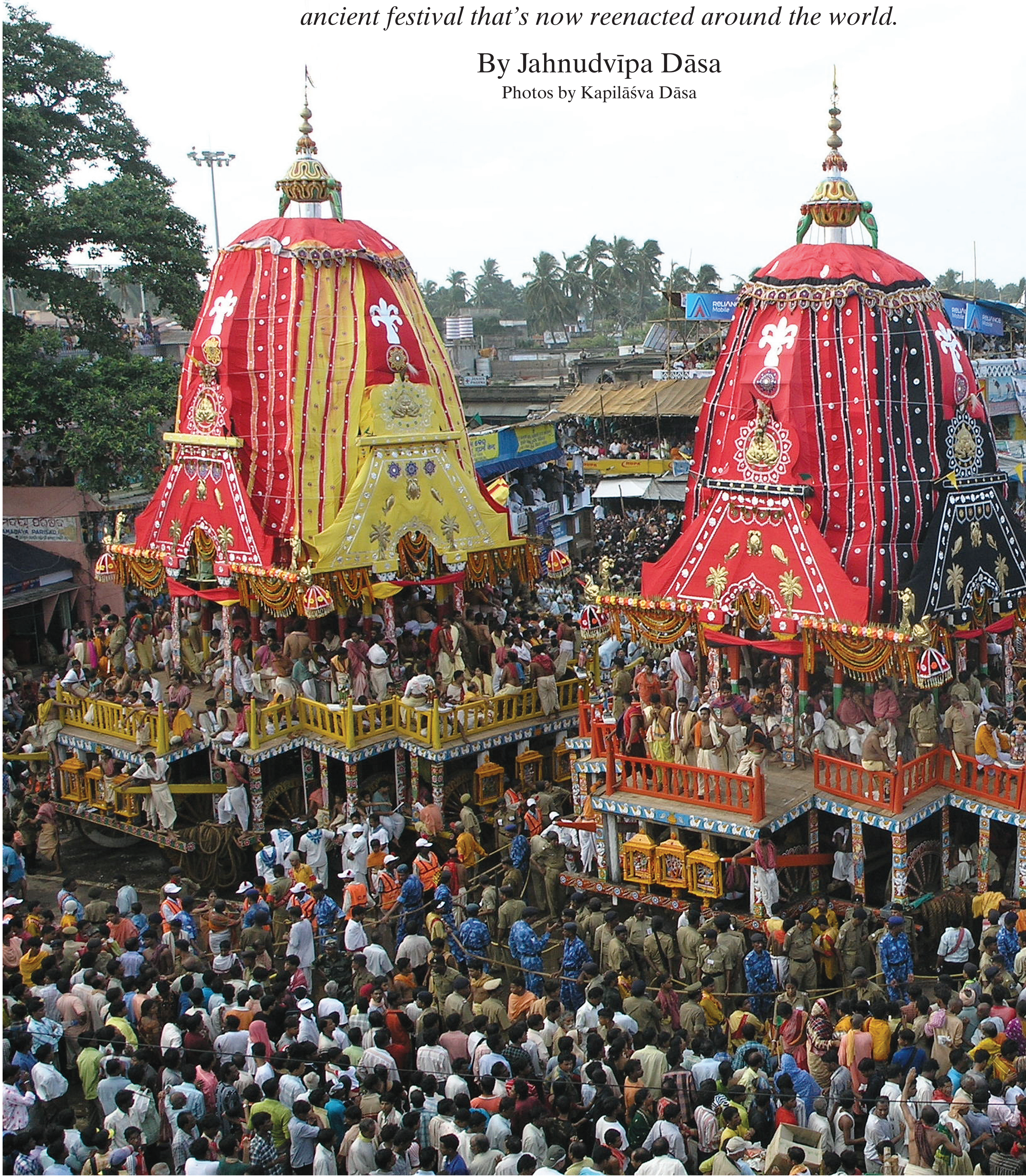
Jagannatha Puri Ratha

A visitor witnesses the spectacle and the devotion of the famous ancient festival that's now reenacted around the world.

By Jahnudvīpa Dāsa

Photos by Kapilāśva Dāsa

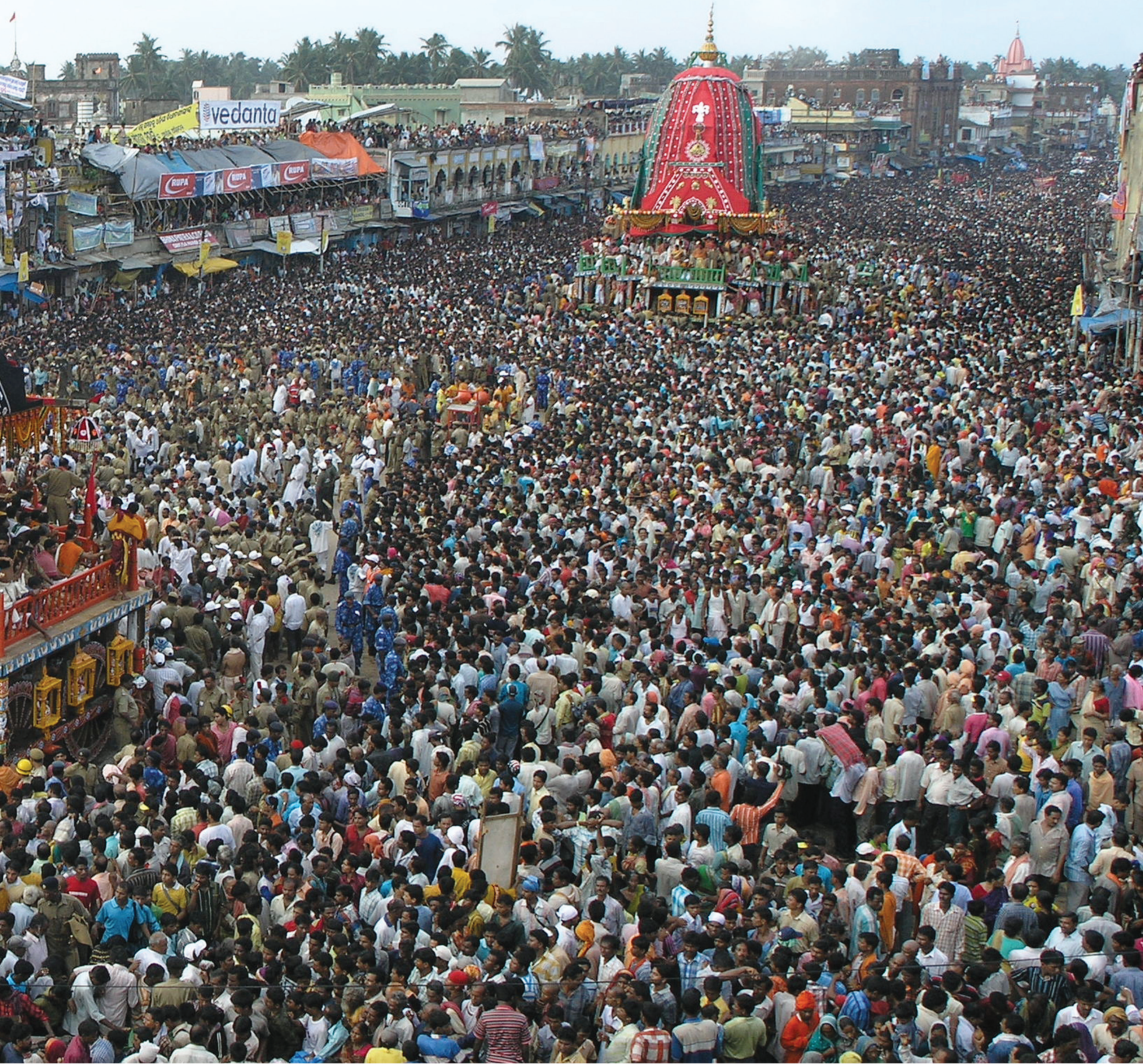


yātrā | A Front-Row View

TO WATCH the biggest religious festival in the world from the front row is a truly mind-blowing experience, especially knowing that this is God coming out to see His people. From dawn on the day of Rathayātrā, thousands of people convene on Grand Road in Jagannatha Puri, Odisha, where huge chariots await the Lord's public appearance. It's something like Times Square on New Years Eve, plus two kilometers of road packed to the millimeter with people. Every year more than one million people assemble for Rathayātrā in Puri. They patiently stand waiting in a gigantic, tightly packed crowd for five hours or more for the Lord to make His scheduled appearance at around 11:00 A.M.

I have a slight crowd-phobia, so a crowd of one million people definitely made me uncomfortable. Luckily, due to being with Krodhaṣāmanī Dāsī, who is best

A million pilgrims crowd Grand Road in Puri, Odisha, for Lord Jagannātha's annual chariot festival.



friends with my wife, Braja Sevakī Dāsī, and is a famous Iyengar yoga teacher, I was nowhere near the crowd. Krodhaṣāmanī knows a family of *paṇḍas* (priests) who care for Jagannātha. They're descendants of the original Shabara tribe that worshiped the Lord long ago, before the temple was built. With Krodhaṣāmanī, I was watching the entire spectacle in a comfortable chair from a rooftop right next to the enormous chariots that sat waiting for the Lord and His brother and sister to come and take their seats.

The chariots are ten meters high, including the canopy, and move on eight huge wheels. I was amazed to hear that they are constructed from hardwood without a single nail—everything is assembled according to ancient prescriptions.

Lord Baladeva's "Walk"

The first to exit the temple is Lord Baladeva. His appearance is signaled by an ear-splitting noise produced by a hundred young priests banging gongs. They dance and beat their gongs—*dam-da-da, dam-da-da*—in a waltz rhythm. The noise is extraordinary. Above it, though, rises the huge roar from hundreds of thousands of people. It's something like the roar when a football team scores at London's Wembley stadium, intensified a hundred times.

Baladeva comes out surrounded by His devotees. Only the top part of Him is visible. He rocks and rolls as if intoxicated. Indeed, His huge white eyes and red pupils underlined by His ear-to-ear grin do make Him seem intoxicated.

And, mind you, I'm talking about a deity carved from a solid two-cubic-meter block of hardwood. He must weigh several hundred kilos. It is not easy to move Him along the ground as if He is walking.

From the temple entrance to the chariot is about thirty meters. The

Lord Baladeva takes His slow "walk" from the temple to His chariot.

huge wheels put the floor of the chariot two meters above ground. A ramp has been built for Him to reach His seat atop the chariot—and what a scene it is to watch! Puri residents tell me that every year is different: Sometimes the Lord just whisks up and takes His seat; other times His devotees have to struggle for half an hour to get him up the five-meter-long ramp. Even though His devotees are apparently carrying Him, He moves completely according to His own will.

This year He was reluctant to get up on His chariot. The devotees carrying Him were sobbing in frustration as they struggled to rock and roll Him up the ramp. It's like walking up a forty-five-degree wooden plank with a woodblock of two hundred kilos. Because the dozen or more devotees carrying Him surround Him, His lower half is never visible. In the middle of their circle Baladeva rocks back and forth and to the sides as He moves along at an excruciatingly slow pace, foot by foot. This year it took the priests half an hour to get Him up the ramp to His throne on the chariot. I was simply in awe of their intense struggle.

The Gongs and The Roaring Crowd

All the time this is going on, the gongs continue their steady ear-splitting waltz and the crowds roar and cheer. Actually, it's not several crowds convening here and there, but one single crowd of a million people.

Another thing that struck me was the crowd control. The military had been called in. Elite troops in blue army fatigues lined the edge of the crowd. The officers in charge carried side arms, but the soldiers were armed with short, wooden batons, two thin pieces of wood strung together at the handle. They make a big slapping sound when they hit, like when you clap your hands, but they cause no damage.

When it came time to pull the chariots, the crowd surged forward to get to the hundred-meter-long pulling ropes. The soldiers beat on the heads of the surging crowd, making loud slapping sounds but hurting no one. It's like being tapped on the head with a roll of newspaper. But it kept the people at bay—and kept me laughing.

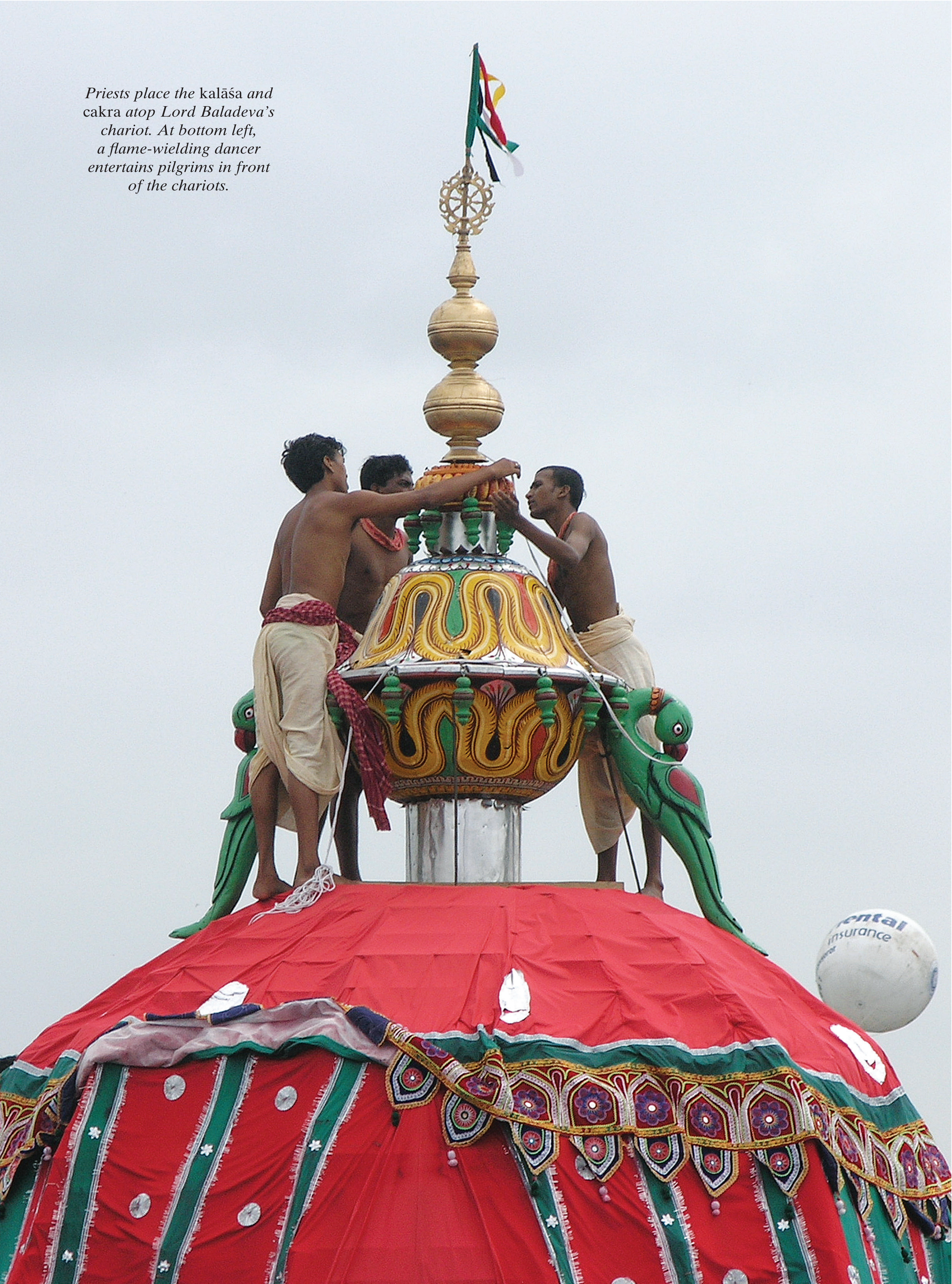
The crowd was so devoted. People stand patiently and wait for five hours for the Lord to come out so they can see Him. Many people told me they don't come to see the Lord; they come to be seen by the Lord. And, indeed, when Jagannātha looks at you with those huge round eyes and grinning mouth, it does some wonder to the heart. It is a kind of liberation.

Next to come out is Subhadrā Devī. Ever the lady, she swiftly moves right up the ramp and takes Her seat on the chariot. She doesn't walk, but is carried on the heads of Her devotees quickly and efficiently.

Yoking the Horses

In the meantime the priests begin to attach four huge horses made from solid blocks of hardwood to Baladeva's chariot. The size of small ponies, these wooden horses struck me with wonder and incomprehension. They were carved and depicted in all their glory with raised hooves and colorful detail. To get them all tied to the front of Baladeva's chariot was a complex process I watched with interest. I was fascinated to behold the teams of devotees, numbering more than a hundred, milling around the chariot and making the awesome spectacle possible.

Now Jagannātha suddenly decided to appear. This year everything happened at a much slower pace than usual. It was nearly 2:00 P.M., and still He had not reached His chariot. When the Lord of the universe appears, the exultant crowd erupts in a tremendous roar of joy. The percussion group of a hundred devotees goes crazy on their gongs, beating them with intense vigor. Like His brother, Jagannātha moves at an excruciatingly slow pace, as if unwilling. It takes Him close to an hour to walk the fifty meters to get on His throne. The devotees handling the Lord are all descendants in families that have served Jagannātha for thousands of years. Each family is entrusted with a specific service for each deity.



Priests place the kalāśa *and* cakra *atop Lord Baladeva's chariot. At bottom left, a flame-wielding dancer entertains pilgrims in front of the chariots.*

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The Procession Begins

Finally Their Lordships Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā have taken their seats on the chariots and the procession is about to begin. Now it's nearly four o'clock in the afternoon. Not till after 6:00 P.M. have they finally gone, traveling down Grand Road towards Gundicha Temple. They are drawn by the wooden horses and by thousands of people at the ropes. Jagannātha is drawn by white stallions, Baladeva by black, and Subhadrā by four brown mares.

When the three chariots have been wheeled off, we climb down the stairs from our rooftop and head back to our hotels. We opted not to follow the mass of people who are going with Jagannātha down Grand Road for the two-kilometer procession to Gundicha. There the Lord will stay outside the temple the whole night to give His people an opportunity for His audience (*darśana*).

Deep Impressions

The next night, Krodhaṣāmanī and I go to Gundicha to see the Lord one last time before He enters the temple grounds, where He will stay for ten days before the return Ratha-yātrā. When we arrive, we see queues of people reaching all the way back along Grand Road to the Jagannātha temple. They stand patiently and orderly for hours, waiting to climb the stairs onto the chariots to see Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā in person, up close.

Unlike these faithful *bhaktas,* we don't want to stand in a line for hours to see Lord Jagannātha. Instead we try to catch a glimpse of Him from the ground. It's quite impossible. A steady stream of people milling about close to the Lord blocks our vision.

When we stand in front of Baladeva's chariot, however, there is a tiny lull in the stream of people and Baladeva is looking at us with His ecstatic expression. The few seconds I am able to behold Baladeva on His chariot surrounded by His loving devotees makes an indescribably wonderful impression on my heart. We don't stay until the Lord enters Gundicha. We are too tired, and so we go back to our hotels. That night I feel myself enveloped in an ecstatic, comforting blanket of

Lord Jagannātha. What a wonderful experience to see Kṛṣṇa in Puri! Jaya Jagannātha!

Jahnudvīpa Dāsa joined ISKCON in Copenhagen in 1982. His services have included book distribution, Radio Krishna, and translating and editing for the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. He and his wife live in Mayapur, West Bengal, where he designs ISKCON books and magazines.

ISKCON devotees chant in the ocean of pilgrims (above). Below, the chariots slowly make their way to the Gundicha temple, pulled by the enthusiastic crowd.

Meditation While Working

After many years of service in a spiritual environment, a job in a public school challenges one devotee's attempts to always remember Kṛṣṇa.

By Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

THE LONE MYSTIC sitting in a mountain cave by a clear, flowing river, with access to ample fruit and nut trees, may be your idea of what is needed for a truly spiritual life. Or maybe your idea is to join a *saṅga,* a group of serious spiritual aspirants who live in a holy place, spending their days in study, singing, sweet discussion of the divine, and meditation on the mystic mantra of divine love: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Or maybe you're convinced that life anywhere, doing most anything, can be fully connected with the divine, but are not sure how to go about doing so in a fully integrated and authentic way without losing either ordinary competence or inner spiritual focus.

How to combine spiritual awareness and working in the world? In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa tells His friend Arjuna that one can and should connect all of life, every moment and every breath, to the divine. After teaching Arjuna that the nature of his thoughts and consciousness are the prime determinant of his future, and thus his highest priority, Kṛṣṇa tells him not to abandon the battle and take up meditation but rather to

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

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"think of Me and fight." Prince Arjuna is on a battlefield, about to fight formidable foes, just the appearance of whom would cause the most courageous to tremble. Arjuna will require much physical skill and mental concentration to win, or even to stay alive. In that situation, how can he fully fix his mind, without any deviation, on Kṛṣṇa?

Since I made a firm commitment to spiritual life in 1973, I have worked almost entirely with like-minded persons on projects of service to Kṛṣṇa. But in 2005–2006 I worked as an assistant school principal in a government primary school in the U.S. as part of my doctoral degree. American government schools disallow any open religious practice—teachers have been fired for reading their own Bible during break time if the reading was done in view of the students. In some states it is against the law to wear anything signifying religion, including a small cross on a necklace. In addition to legal constraints, the place where I lived and studied at the time was in what is called the Bible Belt. While the local school authorities might overlook a teacher or administrator who displayed some Christian affiliation, they were not likely to tolerate any open practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It would be a challenge for me, then, to maintain a high level of transcendent consciousness in daily circumstances not very conducive to such a state of mind.

During the internship, I wrote reflections on my attempts not only to maintain my external spiritual practices but also to keep or increase my inner consciousness. I hope that the following journal, while at times intensely personal, provides some solace and guidance for others in similar situations.

Beyond Meditation

By following this course, the yogi gradually develops pure love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari. In the course of his progress in devotional service, the hairs on his body stand erect through excessive joy, and he is constantly bathed in a stream of tears occasioned by intense love. Gradually, even the mind, which he used as a means to attract the Lord, as one attracts a fish to a hook, withdraws from material activity.

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam *3.28.34*

Purport by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda:

Here it is clearly mentioned that meditation, which is an action of the mind, is not the perfect stage of *samādhi,* or absorption. In the beginning the mind is employed in attracting the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but in the higher stages there is no question of using the mind. A devotee becomes accustomed to serving the Supreme Lord by purification of his senses. In other words, the yoga principles of meditation are required as long as one is not situated in pure devotional service. The mind is used to purify the senses, but when the senses are purified by meditation, there is no need to sit in a particular place and try to meditate upon the form of the Lord. One becomes so habituated that he automatically engages in the personal service of the Lord. When the mind forcibly is engaged upon the form of the Lord, this is called *nirbīja-yoga,* or lifeless yoga, for the yogi does not automatically engage in the personal service of the Lord. But when he is constantly thinking of the Lord, that is called s*abīja-yoga,* or living yoga. One has to be promoted to the platform of living yoga.

One should engage in the service of the Lord twenty-four hours a day, as confirmed in the *Brahma-saṁhitā.* The stage of *premāñjana-cchurita* can be attained by developing complete love. When one's love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead in devotional service is fully developed, one always sees the Lord, even without artificially meditating on His form. His vision is divine because he has no other engagement. At this stage of spiritual realization it is not necessary to engage the mind artificially. Since the meditation recommended in the lower stages is a means to come to the platform of devotional service, those already engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord are above such meditation. This stage of perfection is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

MY REFLECTIONS WHILE WORKING AS AN ADMINISTRATOR IN A GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

I was not happy with the few short experiences I had working in worldly environments before starting this job. My goal is constant deep mediation on Kṛṣṇa in all circumstances. One challenge to accomplishing this is to change my view of myself as a person who works only with other devotees of Kṛṣṇa on clearly Kṛṣṇa-related projects. Another associated challenge is to redefine work's value. The work I am doing as an intern is not direct service to Kṛṣṇa in the way I have lived that understanding for decades. Yet I have little interest in doing only mundane work. I therefore need to understand the spiritual value in the work I am doing.

My Diminishing Morning Hours

My need to be at school between 7:00 and 7:30 A.M. presents a strong obstacle to my spiritual life. Most of my regulated spiritual practices take place in the early morning. The only way I could complete my regular practice of scripture study, worship, chanting, and prayer in the morning would be to wake up every day at 2:00 A.M. I was used to getting up at 4:00 and decided to start getting up at 3:00. With my exhausting work schedule, even that is difficult. I have adjusted by sometimes doing some or all of my spiritual practice in the evening after work. Doing that is not so satisfactory, however, because I am tired and focusing is more difficult.

Another impediment is the reduction in time I can spend with spiritually like-minded people. My time in the morning is limited, and in the evenings I have little energy. I work with other devotees of Kṛṣṇa over the Internet on various projects, but my time with people supportive of my spiritual goals has greatly reduced.

I now understand that the revelations I have experienced beyond the mind are not at all under my control. They are grace.

I have tried various ways to accomplish my goals of inner meditation, with each having limited success. I have tried chanting and praying in my mind, but the many distractions make this difficult to do constantly, though that is my goal. Sometimes things that happen at work remind me of scriptural stories or teachings, but that also is not constant. I had hoped that with a heartfelt and concentrated morning program of spiritual practice the mood would carry throughout the day. But the lack of time in the morning makes it difficult to have such a program regularly.

In retrospect, I see that I had some confusion about the basic method of doing what I wanted. I thought I could achieve the state of consciousness I wanted only in a deep meditative state of chanting or prayer. I just couldn't understand how to do that while being competent at work. Yet the scriptures encourage us to have a developed spiritual state of existence even while doing difficult and absorbing work in the world. Numerous examples in scripture show people living in that way.

I consulted with people who gave me various advice and direction, but none of them had been in a situation like mine. Their work was connected to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, while they faced some of the same issues, their situation did not generally present the same degree and kind of problems I had.

I was looking for a scriptural quote when I realized I had gotten the theoretical answer I wanted. The verse I read (see sidebar at left) tells about using the mind as a hook to focus on Kṛṣṇa, but eventually going beyond the mind. In the commentary, Prabhupāda explains that *samādhi,* or total and fixed concentration of the mind on the Lord, is not the ultimate state. Beyond that lies the life of the soul, independent of the mind.

When I discussed this concept with a friend, we concluded that the reason for my lack of success is not my work but my spiritual immaturity. At this point in my progress, I can generally enter into deep meditation only when the external situation is helpful. The rest of the time I am aware of Kṛṣṇa in a general way. My friend compared it to being aware of a passenger sitting next to you while you are driving.

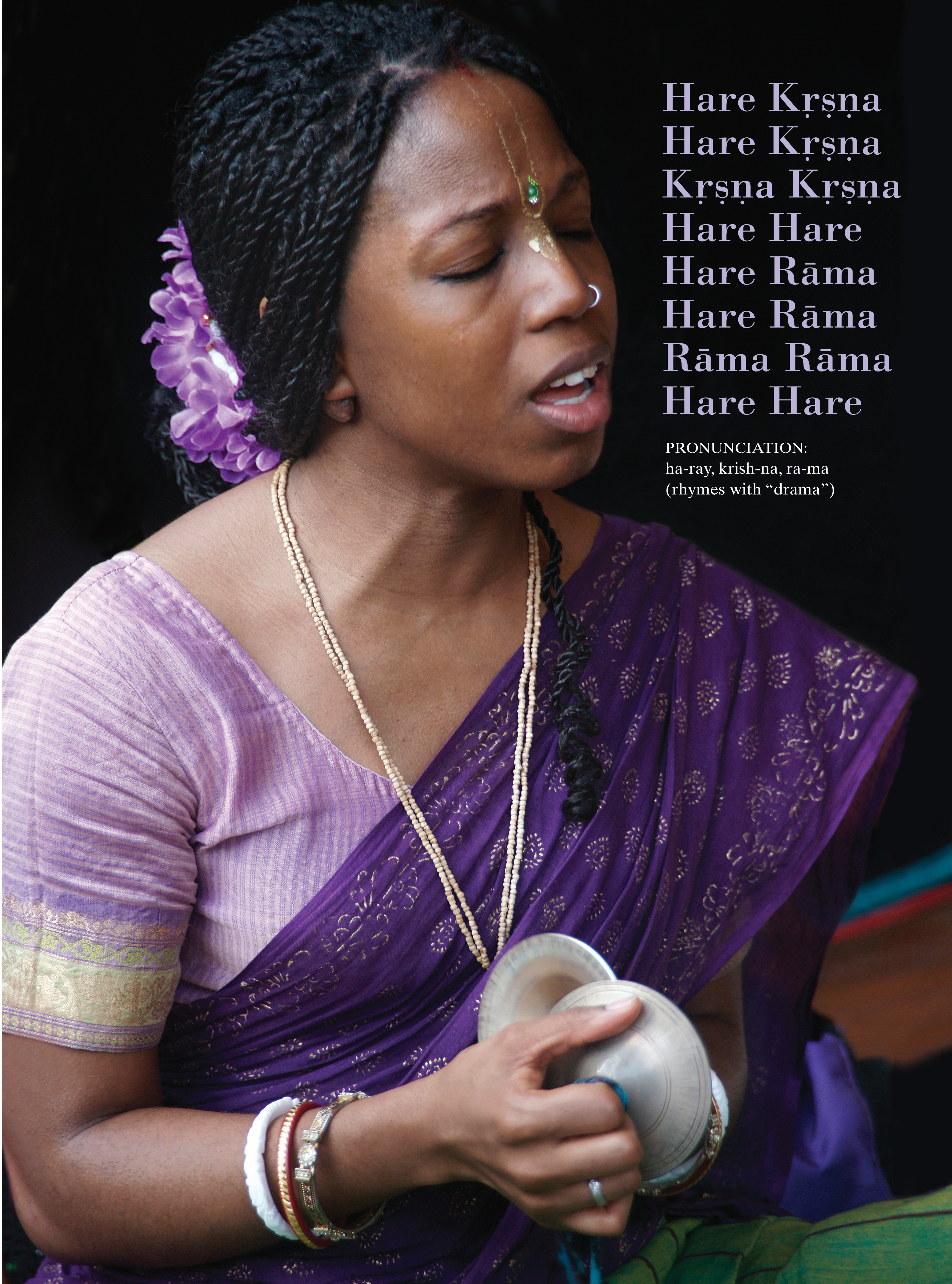
I now understand that the revelations I have experienced beyond the mind are not at all under my control. They are grace. I can attract that grace by entering into focused, contemplative prayer at least during the time I have set aside for chanting and singing each day. Doing this remains a challenge for me because of my lack of time early in the morning. I am working to improve the quality of my chanting, even if I have to chant in the evening.

I also turn my attention to Kṛṣṇa during the day as much as possible. Undoubtedly, doing this is difficult, and both the frequency and the depth of my meditations have varying degrees of success. I am trying to attract the attention of the Lord, who can then—when He wants and by His grace—pull me to a higher platform. But when I enter a mood of concentrated meditation during work hours or even achieve a general consciousness of Kṛṣṇa at work, that frame of mind sometimes expresses itself in language and behavior welcome in a society of Kṛṣṇa devotees but incongruous in a public school.

One practice I've found helpful is to listen to spiritual music at work. Because much of my music would sound strange to my co-workers, however, I need to use earphones, making it a little difficult to hear what others are saying. In my work, people come to my office or stop me in the halls to bring things to my attention. I can play some music through my computer speakers, but songs that will not sound strange and invite unwanted attention are limited.

Another helpful practice is to go outside for my noon *gāyatri*-mantra meditation. Sometimes the weather doesn't allow that, and people tend to interrupt me when it does. On days when I do not get a peaceful five minutes midday for *gāyatri,* I start to feel somewhat panicked. Altogether, I have learned some valuable lessons—mostly about how difficult it is to do what I set out to do.

I hope that the end of this internship will be the end of my working in an environment where I cannot



Hare Kṛṣṇa
Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa
Hare Hare
Hare Rāma
Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma
Hare Hare

PRONUNCIATION:
ha-ray, krish-na, ra-ma
(rhymes with "drama")

openly incorporate my spiritual life into my work. While I still would like to achieve the full success I had hoped for before the end of the internship, I am increasingly doubtful that such is likely.

Strategies for Greater Goals

My strategies for success are aimed at my broader goals. My first strategy is to have a job where my boss and co-workers accept and even value an open and honest spiritual life. I realize that restricting my job choices in this way is not practical for everyone. But I have come to accept that it is a matter of my very spiritual survival and that if I hope to achieve love of Kṛṣṇa in this life, other options are less satisfactory.

My second strategy for success is to always keep in communication with people on an advanced spiritual level. I can associate with them through email, Internet chats, and phone. I may not be sitting next to them, but some sort of personal communication makes a huge difference. Though I can also meditate on being with great souls no longer living on earth, to maintain my spiritual life in my present state I need more than that. To go above a maintenance level and make further progress, I seem to need the company and help of those now living.

A third strategy is to live near a community of Kṛṣṇa devotees and be part of their program of regular worship. A management change made visiting my local temple daily less attractive, complicating my attempt to blend work and spiritual life. On the positive side I have learned to cut my dependence on a temple for daily spiritual strength; on the negative side the journey has been much more difficult than it probably would have been otherwise. I am now starting to resume my decades-long practice of daily temple attendance, at this very end of my internship, and hope to figure out a way to attend as much of the

(*please turn to page 55*)

Yamarāja Dāsa

CALENDAR

*This calendar is calculated for Mayapur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to **www.krishnadays.com**.*

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

October 30–November 28

(*Month of Dāmodara*)

NOVEMBER

4—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

7—Appearance of Radha Kunda.

10—Ramā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

14—Diwali, the festival of illuminating Kṛṣṇa's temples with lamps. Govardhana Pūjā, the festival commemorating the worship of Govardhana Hill by the residents of Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa's lifting the hill. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for details.

17—Disappearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Devotees observe this day with personal remembrances of Śrīla Prabhupāda, readings from his biography, and fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

21—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, a great follower of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

24—Utthānā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master. Fasting till noon.

27—Last day of Dāmodara-vrata and Cāturmāsya.

28—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Rāsa-yātrā. Last day of Bhīṣma Pañcaka.

November 29–December 28

(*Month of Keśava*)

DECEMBER

10—Utpannā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

23—The anniversary of the day on which Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā.*

24—Vyañjulī Mahā-dvādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans for Mokṣadā Ekādaśī.

December 29–January 27

(*Month of Nārāyaṇa*)

JANUARY

1—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

8—Saphalā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

CHARITABLE GIVING

(*continued from page 26*)

The idea is to begin to *consistently* give a certain percentage to support the mission of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and we can plan to gradually increase this percentage. For householders this is a blessed and necessary duty.

When the Lord sees our steady commitment to giving in charity, He will help us do so, from within and without. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote in a letter (January 24, 1977), "Kṛṣṇa will give you intelligence how to engage in honest, brilliant, glorious work on His behalf. There is no need to engage in anything dishonest. Kṛṣṇa has given enough money. Now earn by honest means."

To Whom Should You Give?

The International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness (ISKCON), a branch of the Caitanya tree, has many causes, projects, and people focused on Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission. Imagine what would happen if thousands of devotees committed to giving in charity to *regularly* support these initiatives.

For example, the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium in Mayapur is being built based on Śrīla Prabhupāda's vision and instruction. It is moving forward because caring and faithful devotees are giving in charity to make that stupendous project happen.

Many *sannyāsīs* and other mature devotees travel to make sure Lord Caitanya's message is spread. Many rely on donations and charity to do their selfless service.

Temples and Nama Hatta programs need support to steadfastly distribute *prasādam* and spiritual knowledge. Particularly, we should support the local Hare Kṛṣṇa establishment where we are nourished and enlivened.

One senior Vaiṣṇava on a small, fixed income has chosen to support Śrīla Prabhupāda's first temple at 26 Second Avenue by donating $51 per month from her checking account.

"I want to support Prabhupāda's great work in every way I can," she says.

She has given in charity to support *sannyāsīs,* book distribution, the care and upkeep of cows, senior devotees like herself, and more.

A husband and wife, both professionals, don't have children but have chosen to support many devotee preachers and causes. Their charity is regular, focused, and persistent. They told me they work to be able to give charity and fulfill this very important service in the *gṛhastha āśrama.*

Vaisnava Care, the Grihastha Vision Team, the Festival of Inspiration, Śrīla Prabupāda's book archives, cow protection—so many worthy endeavors need our support, and we can support more than one at a time.

Ultimate Benefit

Ultimately, giving in charity is good for the soul and gives much benefit to the giver. As Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in *Kṛṣṇa* (Chaper 81), "What the devotee actually offers to the Lord is not needed by the Lord. He is self-sufficient. If the devotee offers something to the Lord, it acts for his own interest because whatever a devotee offers to the Lord comes back in a quantity a million times greater than what was offered. One does not become a loser by giving to the Lord, but he becomes a gainer by millions of times." ❁

Kṛṣṇanandinī Devī Dāsī, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE), a licensed minister of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the state of Ohio, president of ISKCON's Grihastha Vision Team, and co-director, along with her husband, Tariq Saleem Ziyad, of the Dasi-Ziyad Family Institute in Cleveland, Ohio.

YOU'RE INVITED!

The Sunday Feast

Most Hare Kṛṣṇa centers around the world put on a special festival every Sunday—for regulars as well as newcomers. Come by and get a taste of the world's oldest cultural tradition. Call your nearest center to find out the schedule for the Sunday Feast.

(See "Centers," pages 56–58, or visit directory.krishna.com.)

Love at First Sight

How a moment and a few sincere words changed a life.

By Pervin Jumala, as told to Kalyani Ajrekar

WOW! THAT'S SO beautiful." Firoz and I were frozen for a moment, awe-struck by our first glimpses of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, named Rādhā-Gopīnātha at this temple in the Chowpatty section of Mumbai. We sat down, immersing ourselves in the irresistible melodious spiritual music. We followed everyone else and sang, "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa . . . ," raising our hands in the air. I didn't know what set me so much at ease that I could absorb myself in the singing. Tears rolled down my cheeks as the doors of the altar closed.

Kalyani Ajrekar

Pervin Jumala

My journey to Kṛṣṇa consciousness started three years ago when I was visiting a restaurant with my husband, Firoz, and a few of our friends. It was a Saturday night. I had come home late that evening. Tired from work, I decided not to cook and instead planned to have dinner out. Not much later, we were waiting outside the restaurant for our turn to enter. Forty-five minutes passed with no sign our wait would be over soon. Our group was discussing politics and life, which soon led to a heated argument. To avoid the tension, Firoz and I went for a stroll.

That's when we saw a beautiful building with carved stones. We didn't expect it to be a temple, because unlike conventional temples there were no vendors selling flowers, incense, and sweets outside. Somehow we had arrived at this beautiful temple during *śayana-darśana,* the time just before the deities go to sleep, a meditative time during which devotees often chant softly for the Lord. My husband and I were overwhelmed by the amazing sight of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, something we had never seen before.

Moments later, I walked out of the temple hall with mixed emotions: happiness at having experienced something amazing, and pain upon realizing I had been missing it all my life.

I am Zoroastrian by birth and have been very religious since childhood. According to the teachings of Zoroastrianism, believers address God as Ahura Mazda, the Lord of Wisdom. I followed the instructions of the Prophet Zarathushtra and the holy scriptures called *Khordeh Avesta*. I also observed the three main tenets of Zoroastrianism: Humata Hukhata Huvarashta, which means "good thoughts, good words, good deeds."

In our faith there is an initiation ceremony called *navjote.* It is the confirmation of a Zoroastrian child into the religion of his birth. *Nav* means "new" and *jote* means "zaothra" or "a designated participant," i.e., one who offers prayers. So *navjote* means "the new one now offers prayers." At the age of seven I prepared myself for *navjote* by learning all the prayers by heart. They were complicated and in a language unknown to me. At the age of thirteen I attended a class that taught me the principles of the Zoroastrian religion. I learned that God was all-good, the eternal light, the giver of happiness, while Ahirman was the dark evil force that causes miseries in this world. Good and evil co-exist, as light does not come from darkness and darkness does not come from light. This concept completely confused me. Although God, Ahura Mazda, is more powerful than Ahirman, God would never defeat the dark force completely. I wondered how this could be possible.

God created the seven creations, and man was made the soldier of God, meant to follow the path of good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. Later, with the help of men following this path, God would defeat the evil forces. On that day of victory, happiness would reign forever in this world.

I had not found the answers. I prayed to my impersonal God, hoping He would reveal the answers to me soon.

These teachings raised a lot of doubts in my mind, which led to an avalanche of questions. I tried to read translations of the complicated prayers and scriptures, but I didn't find answers to my questions. Those unanswered questions kept bothering me until finally I stopped praying. My parents were shocked to hear that the religion no longer made any sense to me. But how could it? There was no philosophy or logic. It sounded more like a fairy tale, in which we were to wait for good to eventually triumph over evil. My parents were aghast. They blamed the influence of the college environment for my loss of faith.

Seeking answers to my questions, I started studying the holy scriptures of Islam, Christianity, and Sikhism. But the questions remained unanswered and continued to bother me. With the responsibilities that came with my marriage, private moments became more rare, and my questions were relegated to the subconscious. In time I was blessed with a daughter, and to uphold family tradition I began to teach the same prayers to her. But it was a half-hearted affair. All the while I wondered if the same questions that bothered me would someday bother my little one too. I really dreaded that day because I had not found the answers yet. I prayed to my impersonal God, hoping He would reveal the answers to me soon.

A Return Visit

When I visited the Rādhā-Gopīnātha temple again the next day, a ray of hope entered my life. After our first incidental visit to the temple, the forms of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa had kept flashing in my dreams all that night. Now, like a piece of iron pulled by a magnet, I was drawn to return to the temple. It had not yet opened, but a gentle couple welcomed me, informed me about the Sunday program, and urged me to visit some weekend in the future. I was surprised by the sincere words, loving attention, and warmth the couple extended to me, a complete stranger. I felt at home, and again I participated in the holy music, which I learned was called *saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the holy name.

Not long after that I enrolled in a six-session course on the principles of the *Bhagavad-gītā.* The course brought about a mammoth change in my life. I found answers to many questions, and I was fortunate to meet two excellent speakers who were dedicated, knowledgeable devotees of Kṛṣṇa. They are my spiritual instructors now.

Now I knew that God is a person, Kṛṣṇa. I am not this body; I am a pure soul, now merged within this material body. Kṛṣṇa consciousness helps to liberate the soul from material bondage. If we practice sincerely, at the end of life we shall be free from all material contamination, our spiritual life will be completely revived, and we shall go back home, back to Godhead, where we can enjoy eternal life in the company of the Lord Himself.

I started chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* on beads, as I had learned during the discourses that chanting the holy name is the easiest way to connect to the Lord. I was soon chanting sixteen rounds every day during *brāhma-muhūrta,* the auspicious early-morning hours.

Reaction from Family and Friends

Accepting Kṛṣṇa consciousness has left my friends and family wonderstruck. Some of them are surprised, even confused, to see the change in my life. My father-in-law calls the bead bag hanging around my neck "the big bell." Old neighborhood friends now call me the "grass-and-root girl," referring to my new vegetarian diet. My husband still frowns when I munch biscuits at family dinners at nonvegetarian restaurants. But all of this I believe has added spice to my life. I enjoy these interactions as signs of love from dear ones. I am sure their surprise and shock will someday change to acceptance—of me and of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as well.

I strongly feel Kṛṣṇa's presence in my life, and I see how He keeps rewarding me for every extra endeavor I take up to get closer to Him. Recently, my husband and daughter moved to Dubai, and I traveled with them to help them settle in the new city. A few days later, I returned to Mumbai, but immediately on reaching home I learned about the Dubai Rathayātrā, which was to be held a week later. I regretted coming back; if I had stayed a week more I could have attended the event. Making another trip to Dubai would be too expensive. Naturally, I was reluctant to spend so much money, but I went ahead and booked the tickets anyway.

Unfortunately, while I was waiting at the airport someone from the airline approached me and informed me that my flight had been canceled. I was angry and upset.

"How can you do that?" I yelled at the staff.

Rathayātrā was scheduled for the next day, and I didn't want to arrive at the last moment. An airline employee offered to put me up in a five-star hotel for free until the night flight, but I pulled my bag up to the registration desk and asked for a new boarding pass, prepared to spend a few hours waiting for the next flight.

A few minutes later, to my pleasant surprise, the same airline employee approached me and said, "We apologize for the inconvenience, madam. Please accept a free return ticket as a gift from us."

"Kṛṣṇa is so kind," I told myself. "He rewarded me even for my half-hearted endeavor. And he overlooked my short temper too."

Kṛṣṇa's surprises on my journey so far have been countless, and I am sure there are many more to come. Today, by the grace of my spiritual instructors, I am making a contribution by serving in Gopal's Fun School, a temple initiative to impart spiritual knowledge to children. I help children chant verses from the *Bhagavad-gītā*. I even conduct preliminary courses on the *Gītā* for adults. It's a joyful experience to connect wandering souls like me with Kṛṣṇa.

A motivational speaker once rightly said, "There are no traffic jams on the extra mile." My spiritual journey is an extra mile on the expressway of *bhakti,* under the loving care of devotees, and destined to end at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. I am determined to go on and on and on.

To contact Pervin Jumala, email Kalyani Ajrekar: kalyaniajrekar@gmail.com

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MEDITATION

(*continued from page 51*)

morning worship service as possible and still get to work on time.

My fourth strategy for success is to spend part of each day, even if only a short time, specifically nourishing my inner spiritual longings. I can do this through reading the prayers and poetry of saints, through deliberating on certain passages from scripture, through song, and through focused meditation. This strategy has been of great help to me during the internship. Perhaps it is one of the most important things I have done.

Spiritual and material competences seem to be at odds with each other. In some ways they are. Yet since everything is Kṛṣṇa's creation, there are certainly ways to live on both levels in harmony. One who does so would not even see a distinction between his or her work and spiritual consciousness.

Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī, a BTG associate editor, has a Ph.D. in educational leadership from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Dr. Best Learn to Read, *her three-part series to teach reading to children, is available at the Krishna.com Store.*

LETTERS

(*continued from page 5*)

If the *jīva* has come in contact with a pure devotee, who can be even more merciful than the Lord Himself, then the devotee will petition the Lord on the *jīva's* behalf and encourage the Lord to assist in that soul's spiritual advancement. In this case the Lord will arrange for things to happen in such a way that material desires will be eradicated and the living entity will make spiritual advancement.

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 22.38–39) Caitanya Mahāprabhu states, "Kṛṣṇa says, 'If one engages in My transcendental loving service but at the same time wants the opulence of material enjoyment, he is very, very foolish. Indeed, he is just like a person who gives up ambrosia to drink poison. Since I am very intelligent, why should I give this fool material prosperity? Instead I shall induce him to take the nectar of the shelter of My lotus feet and make him forget illusory material enjoyment.'"

Replies were written by Krishna.com Live Help volunteers. Please write to us at: BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, Florida 32616, USA. Email: editors@krishna.com.

How to Put BTG in Your Will

After providing for their families and loved ones, subscribers may want to put *Back to Godhead* in their wills, thus helping to assure the long-term future of this work. In the USA, bequests are free of estate tax and can substantially reduce the amount of your assets claimed by the government.* You can give needed support for *Back to Godhead* by simply including the following words in your will: *I give, devise, and bequeath to* Back to Godhead, *18024 NW 112th Blvd., Alachua, FL 32615* (insert amount being given here) *to be used to support* Back to Godhead *and its related activities, including the Krishna.com website.* A bequest can be a specific dollar amount, a specific piece of property, a percentage of an estate, or all or part of the residue of an estate. You can also name BTG as a contingency beneficiary in the event someone named in your will is no longer living. It is recommended that a lawyer help in drafting or amending a will.

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*If you live outside the USA, check the estate tax laws for your country.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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Founder-*Ācārya:* His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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Madurai, TN — 37 Maninagaram Main Rd., 625 001/ Tel. (452) 274-6472
Mangalore, Karnataka — ISKCON Sri Jagannath Mandir, near Hotel Woodlands, Bunts Hotel Rd., 575 003/ Tel. (824) 2423326 or 2442756, or 9844325616
◆ **Mayapur, WB —** ISKCON, Shree Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir, Shree Mayapur Dham, Dist. Nadia, 741 313/ Tel. (3472) 245620, 245240, or 245355/ Fax: (3472) 245238/ mayapur.chandrodaya@pamho.net
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◆ **Mumbai, Maharashtra —** Hare Krishna Land, Juhu 400 049/ Tel. (22) 26206860/ Fax: (22) 26205214/ info@iskconmumbai.com; guest.house.bombay@pamho.net
◆ **Mumbai, Maharashtra —** 7 K. M. Munshi Marg, Chowpatty 400 007/ Tel. (22) 23665500/ Fax: (22) 23665555/ info@radhagopinath.com
Mumbai, Maharashtra — Shristhi Complex, Mira Rd. (E), opposite Royal College, Dist. Thane, 401 107/ Tel. (22) 2811-7795 or 6/ Fax: (22) 2811-8875/ jagjivan.gkg@pamho.net
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New Delhi — 41/77, Punjabi Bagh (West), 110 026/ Tel. (11) 25222851 or 25227478
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Pandharpur, Maharashtra — Hare Krishna Dhama, East Bank of Chandrabhaga River, Pandharpur, Dist. Solapur, 413 304/ Tel. (2186) 267242 or 267266, or 9423335991/ iskcon.pandharpur@pamho.net
Patna, Bihar — Sri Sri Banke Bihariji Mandir, Golok Dham, Budha Marg, Patna-1/ Tel. (612) 2220794, 2687637, or 2685081; or 9431021881/ Fax: (612) 2205929/ krishna.kripa.jps@pamho.net
Pune, Maharashtra — 4 Tarapoor Rd., Camp, 411 001/ Tel. (20) 41033222 or 3/ nvcc@iskconpune.in
Puri, Odisha — Bhakti Kuti, Swargadwar, 752 001/ Tel. (6752) 231440
Raipur, Chhatisgarh — Hare Krishna Land, Alopi Nagar, Opposite Maharshi Vidyalaya, Tatibandh, Raipur 492 001/ Tel. (771) 5037555 or 9893276985/ iskconraipur@yahoo.com
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◆ **Tirupati, AP —** K.T. Rd., Vinayaka Nagar, 517 507/ Tel. (877) 2231760 or 2230009/ revati.raman.jps@pamho.net (Guesthouse: guesthouse.tirupati@pamho.net)
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Vijayawada, AP — Venkatapalem Karakatta Rd., Undavalli Village, Tadepalli Mandaal, Vijayawada, Dist. Guntur 522 501/ Tel. (8645) 272513/ mmdasiskconvijayawada@gmail.com
Visakhapatnam, AP — Hare Krishna Land, Sagaranagar-45 (City office and mail: 11-9-36, Plot no. 54, Daspalla Hills, Visakhapatnam-3)/ Tel. (891)2528376 or 6537625/ samba.jps@pamho.net (Guesthouse: guesthouse.vizag@pamho.net)
◆ **Vrindavan, UP —** Krishna-Balaram Mandir, Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg, Raman Reti, Dist. Mathura, 281 124/ Tel. & Fax: (565) 2540728/ iskcon.vrindavan@pamho.net; (Guesthouse: Tel. (565) 2540022; ramamani@sancharnet.in)
Warangal, AP — Mulugu Rd., Ayappa Pidipally, 506 007/ Tel. (8712) 426182
Yamunanagar, Haryana — ISKCON Hare Krishna Dham, Hare Krishna Marg, Raghunathpuri, Yamunanagar 135001/ Tel. (1732) 321001 or (mobile) 09355330775/ vishu_bakshi05@yahoo.co.in

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Assam — Karnamadhu, Dist. Karimganj
Chamorshi, Maharashtra — 78 Krishnanagar Dham, Dist. Gadhachiroli, 442 603/ Tel. (218) 623473
Hyderabad, AP (New Naimisaranya Farm) — P.O. Dabilpur Village, Medchal Tq., Dist. R.R., 501 401/ Tel. (40) 65520070 or 9440057263/ naimisaranya@pamho.net
Indore, MP (Krishna-Balarama Mandir) — Hare Krishna Vihar, Nipania Village/ Tel. (731) 572794

Many temples have their own websites, which you can find at our online directory: http://directory.krishna.com. Telephone numbers include country codes, identified by a +. To save space, we've skipped the codes for North America (1) and India (91). For information on international calling, go to www.howtocallabroad.com. ◆ Temples with restaurants or dining

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Puri, Odisha — ISKCON, Bhaktivedanta Ashram, Sipasirubuli, 752 001/ Tel. (6752) 230494
Surat, Gujarat — Bhaktivedanta Rajavidyalaya, Krishnalok, Surat-Bardoli Rd. Gangapur, P. O. Gangadhara, Dist. Surat, 394 310/ Tel. (2622) 63546
Vrindavan, UP — Vrinda Kund, Nandagaon, Dist. Mathura

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Toronto, Ontario — 243 Avenue Rd., M5R 2J6/ Tel. (416) 922-5415/ Fax: (416) 922-1021/ toronto@pamho.net
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Las Vegas, Nevada — Govinda's Center of Vedic India, 7181 Dean Martin Dr., 89118/ Tel. (702) 434-8332/ info@govindascenter.com
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San Jose, California — 951 S. Bascom Ave., 95128/ Tel. (408) 293-4959/ iskconsanjose@yahoo.com
Seattle, Washington — 1420 228th Ave. S.E., Sammamish, 98075/ Tel. (425) 246-8436/ Fax: (425) 868-8928/ info@vedicculturalcenter.org
◆ **Spanish Fork, Utah —** Krishna Temple Project & KHQN Radio, 8628 S. State Rd., 84660/ Tel. (801) 798-3559/ Fax: (801) 798-9121/ utahkrishnas@gmail.com
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Carriere, Mississippi (New Talavan) — 31492 Anner Rd., 39426/ Tel. (601) 749-9460 or 799-1354/ Fax: (601) 799-2924/ talavan@hughes.net
Gurabo, Puerto Rico (New Govardhana Hill) — Carr. 181, Km. 16.3, Bo. Santa Rita, Gurabo (mail: HC-01, Box 8440, Gurabo, PR 00778)/ Tel. (787) 367-3530 or (787) 737-1722/ manonatha@gmail.com
Hillsborough, North Carolina (New Goloka) — 1032 Dimmocks Mill Rd., 27278/ Tel. (919) 732-6492/ bkgoswami@earthlink.net
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Mulberry, Tennessee (Murari-sevaka) — 532 Murari Ln., 37359/ Tel. (931) 759-6888/ murari_sevaka@yahoo.com
Port Royal, Pennsylvania (Gita Nagari) — 534 Gita Nagari Rd., 17082/ Tel. (717) 527-4101/ dhruva.bts@pamho.net
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Birmingham, England — 84 Stanmore Rd., Edgbaston B16 9TB/ Tel. +44 (121) 420 4999/ birmingham@iskcon.org.uk
Cardiff, Wales — The Soul Centre, 116 Cowbridge Rd., East Canton CF11 9DX/ Tel. +44 (29) 2039 0391/ the.soul.centre@pamho.net
Coventry, England — Kingfield Rd., Coventry (mail: 19 Gloucester St., Coventry CV1 3BZ)/ Tel. +44 (24) 7655 2822 or 5420/ haridas.kds@pamho.net
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Murwillumbah, NSW (New Govardhana) — Tyalgum Rd., Eungella (mail: P.O. Box 687), NSW 2484/ Tel. +61 (2) 6672-6579/ Fax: +61 (2) 6672-5498/ ajita@in.com.au

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Brisbane — Krishna's Cafe, 1st Floor, 82 Vulture St., West End, QLD 4000/ brisbane@pamho.net

Burleigh Heads — Govinda's, 20 James St., Burleigh Heads, QLD 4220/ Tel. +61 (7) 5607-0782/ ajita@in.com.au

Maroochydore — Govinda's Vegetarian Cafe, 2/7 First Ave., QLD 4558/ Tel. +61 (7) 5451-0299

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Melbourne — Gopal's, 139 Swanston St., VIC 3000/ Tel. +61 (3) 9650-1578

Perth—Govinda's Restaurant, 194 William St., Northbridge, W. A. 6003/ Tel. +61 (8) 9227-1684/ perth@pamho.net

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Lautoka, Fiji — 5 Tavewa Ave. (mail: P.O. Box 125)/ Tel. +679 6664112/ regprakash@excite.com

Nausori, Fiji — Hare Krishna Cultural Centre, 2nd Floor, Shop & Save Building, 11 Gulam Nadi St., Nausori Town (mail: P.O. Box 2183, Govt. Bldgs., Suva)/ Tel. +679 9969748 or 3475097/ Fax: +679 3477436/ vdas@frca.org.fj

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Sigatoka, Fiji — Sri Sri Radha Damodar Temple, Off Mission St., Sigatoka Town/ Tel. +679 9373703 or 6520866/ drgsmarna@connect.com.fj

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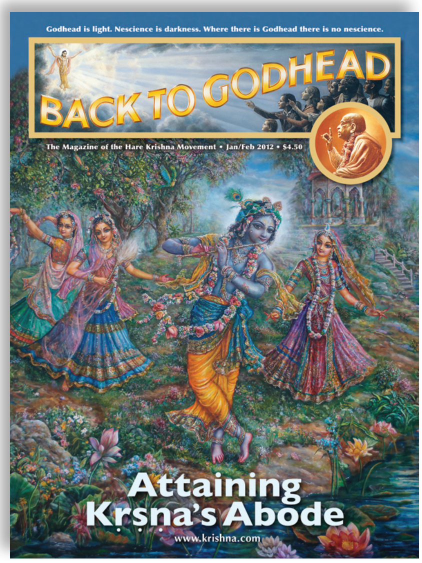
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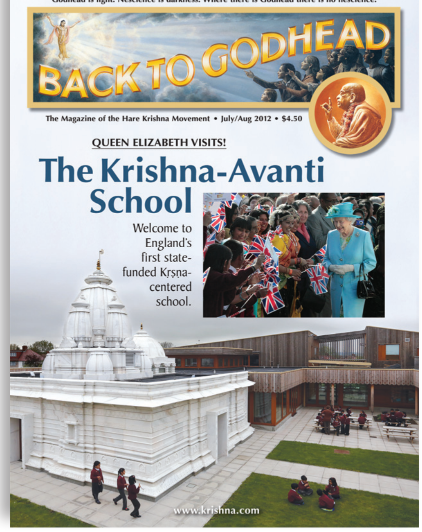
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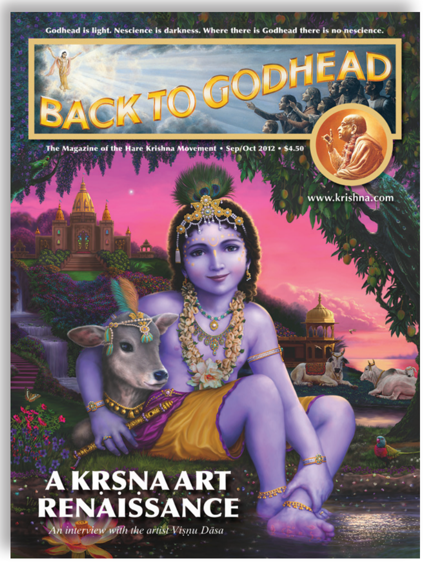
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The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • Sep/Oct 2012 • $4.50
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A KṚṢṆA ART RENAISSANCE
An interview with the artist Viṣṇu Dāsa

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FROM THE EDITOR

Dying to Disappear

LIKE MOST organizations, Śrīla Prabhupāda's Hare Kṛṣṇa movement has its share of jargon. If the word *jargon* brings to mind its negative definition—"unintelligible language"—consider that the first dictionary definition is "specialist language," which simplifies communication within groups. *Prasāda, maṅgala-ārati, kīrtana,* and many other Sanskrit words are part of the jargon of ISKCON, as are many English words with unique ISKCON usages.

These thoughts occurred to me when I looked over the Vaiṣṇava Calendar in this issue and noticed that it includes Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance day.

Now, how did you react to the word *disappearance* in the last sentence? If you're a regular reader of this magazine or have been around Prabhupāda's movement for a while, you probably didn't react to this odd usage. If you're new to all of this, you might have thought, "Disappearance? Like Amelia Earhart?"

Disappearance is one of our jargon words. We "insiders" all know what it means, but others might not, so why use it? Why not just say something like "the anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's death?"

First of all, *disappearance* is traditional. In Sanskrit, a pure devotee's birth and death are referred to as *āvirbhāva* (appearance) and *tirobhāva* (disappearance). *Death* doesn't seem the right word when speaking of a pure devotee of the Lord. Ordinary people die, but a pure devotee leaves the body and this world and enters the eternal spiritual world. We celebrate the pure devotee's *tirobhāva* as a glorious event.

Whether pure devotee or ordinary Joe, each of us is an eternal soul temporarily inhabiting a particular body. We're all just passing through, entering a body at conception and leaving it at death. But Kṛṣṇa tells us in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.13) that these events don't bewilder the self-realized soul, who, unlike the ordinary Joe, is free from misidentification with the body.

Because of my concern that speaking of a devotee's disappearance might confuse some readers, I prefer to write that a devotee *passed away.* Writing guides often include that phrase in their list of euphemisms and suggest sticking with the straight-forward *died.* But I like *passed away* because it's more accurate than *died,* at least from the spiritual perspective. We practitioners of *bhakti-yoga* are primarily concerned with the soul, and the soul never dies; it simply passes away—either to another material body or to the spiritual world.

Some of you reading this might have recalled the following lines by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, written in honor of the great chanter and teacher of the holy name Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura: "He reasons ill who says that Vaiṣṇavas die, When thou art living still in sound!"

This indicates that pure devotees live on in their teachings. So in that sense, too, they never die. We find this idea applied to anyone who has left behind something "immortal," such as a literary or an artistic creation. But the sound by which pure devotees live on in this world is not a temporal creation but an eternal sound transmitted through them from the spiritual world. As Śrīla Narottama Dāsa writes, "The sound of the glorification of Kṛṣṇa is a gift from Goloka Vṛndāvana, Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal abode." If we immerse ourselves in that liberating sound, we won't die either. As Prabhupāda once said, at the end of our time in this body we'll close our eyes, and when we open them, we'll be with Kṛṣṇa.

—*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

Śrīla Prabhupāda

Bhagavad-gītā Gift Set—A great gift for any devotee. This set contains a hardbound *Bhagavad-gita As It Is;* a 13" wooden book stand; *The Complete Bhagavad-gita As It Is* (MP3 CD); an 8" x 10" photo print of *The Charging Chariot;* Śrīla Prabhupāda's Classic Japa CD; Krishna, Govinda, and Gopinatha Altar Incense; and a garnet-colored wooden incense holder. **Save over $15.00 with this gift set. $35.95** KXGS101

Japa Gift Set—Great for anyone practicing *japa* mantra meditation. Includes a large cotton bead bag, our classic Tulasī *japa* beads, Prabhupāda's Classic Japa CD, polished wood counter beads, and two books—*Japa: Nine Keys from the Siksastaka to Improve Your Japa*, and *Chanting Hare Krishna.* **Save almost $10 on this set. $34.95** KXGS106

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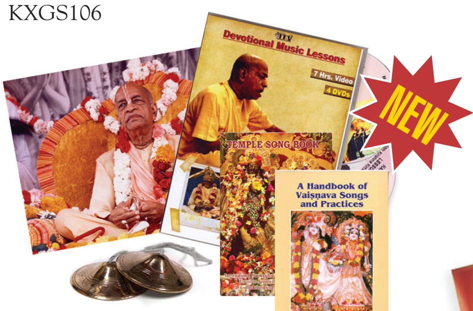

Śrīla Prabhupāda Photo Collection, Color Prints—This collection of photo prints contains 25 beautiful color photographs of Śrīla Prabhupāda during his travels around the world. This mix of popular and less well known photos of Śrīla Prabhupāda is perfect for any home. Or give them as gifts on special occasions. The collection contains nine 5" x 7" photos, eleven 8" x 10" photos, and five 11" x 14" photos. ~~$157.75~~ **SALE $49.99** B6PC501

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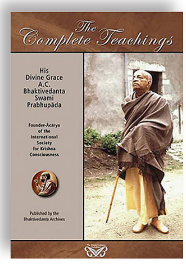

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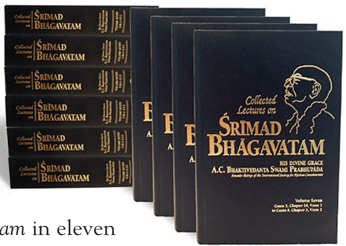
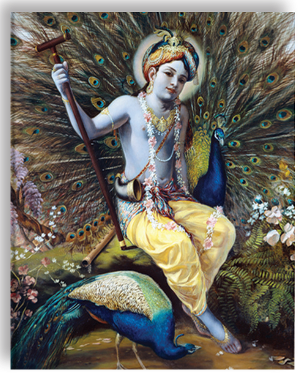
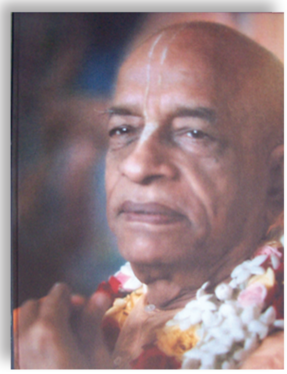


Great Gifts



Kṛṣṇa Art—By Various Artists. A stunning collection of Vaiṣṇava art, featuring some of the most beautiful paintings of Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes. This large-format book includes restored paintings on single pages and double foldout pages, with accompanying text. Hardbound, 320 pages, 146 images, 13" x 15½". **$124.95** BLBH820



Śrīla Prabhupāda—Purify your vision and your heart with this photographic meditation on Śrīla Prabhupāda. Hundreds of photos are beautifully arranged and displayed in this large-format book. Hardbound, 190 pages, hundreds of color and b&w photos, photo index, cloth-covered protective case, 12½" x 15½". **$108.00** BLBH308

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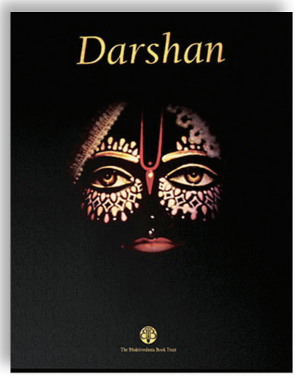
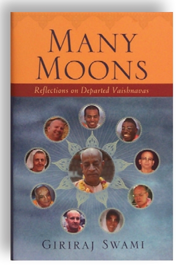


Darshan—A spectacular collection of photos from ISKCON temples around the world. This volume has over 800 images and offers a sweet, intimate visit with each deity. Comes with a complimentary DVD (works on most computers but not set-top DVD players). Hardbound, 300 pages, 13" x 15½". **$108.00** BLBH303



Many Moons: Reflections on Departed Vaishnavas—By Giriraj Swami. The great souls described here are bright, full moons of Śrīla Prabhupada's, Śrī Caitanya's, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Their lives are living instructions of Vaiṣṇava sharing, teaching, and realization. Hardbound, 358 pages, 5¾" x 9". **$19.95** T3BH

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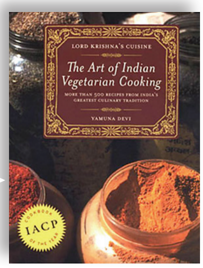
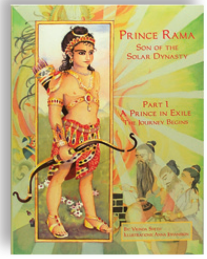
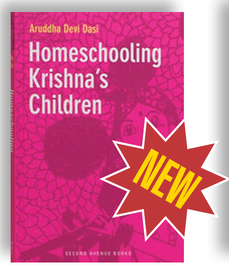
Srimati's Vegetarian Delights—By Srimati Dasi. Over twenty years of experience have allowed Srimati Dasi (Samantha Carol Ghoorun) to produce this blend of classical infusions from the eastern and western worlds. Softbound, 169 pages, numerous color photographs, 8½" x 11". **$20.95** RLBS570



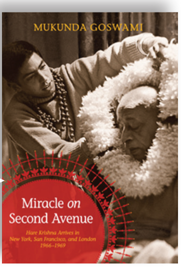
Lord Krishna's Cuisine: The Art of Indian Vegetarian Cooking—By Yamuna Devi. Yamuna's award-winning cookbook has more than 500 recipes from India's great culinary tradition. Hardbound, 800 pages, index, glossary, dust-jacket, 8" x 10". **$39.95** PGBH612



Prince Rama, Son of the Solar Dynasty, Part 1—By Vrinda Sheth; illustrated by Anna Johansson. This book (*A Prince in Exile: The Journey Begins*) is the first of an illustrated trilogy. Through an engaging narration and beautiful illustrations, the author and artist bring to life the exciting story of Rāma's childhood and His marriage to Sītā. Hardbound, 203 pages, numerous illustrations, 8½" x 11½". **$29.95** T3BH732

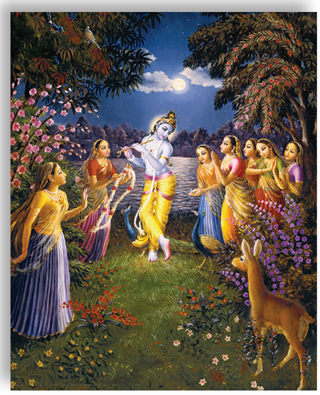


Homeschooling Krishna's Children—By Aruddha Dasi. Many devotee parents are finding that traditional schools do not offer a spiritually nourishing environment for their children, and an increasing number are choosing homeschool. This guide will help you instill in your children strong Kṛṣṇa conscious values while giving them a solid academic education. Softbound, 328 pages, 5" x 7¾". **$15.95** ARBS601



Miracle on Second Avenue: Hare Krishna Arrives in New York, San Francisco, and London—By Mukunda Goswami. In a vivid personal and up-close account of the beginning years (1966–1969) of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in three cities, Mukunda Goswami describes the optimism and energy of Prabhupāda's early followers. Hardbound, 435 pages, 6" x 9½". **$24.95** T3BH617

Gopinatha, the Lord of the Gopis, Canvas Print—This beautiful print of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* on the bank of the Yamuna River will be a centerpiece in your home. With the look and feel of an original painting, this canvas reproduction is ideal for framing. The thick, high-quality artist canvas has a matte finish and a UV protective coating. The image is 20" x 24" and has a 2" border of plain canvas for framing. **$67.95** UPRC251



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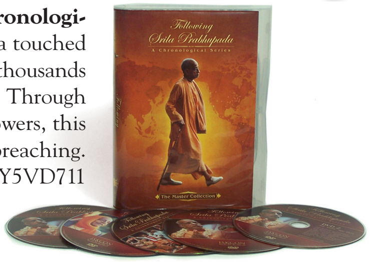

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Spiritual First-Aid Kit—When our soul aches for spiritual connection, or when the body is dying, then we need spiritual first-aid. Small stainless-steel containers hold Vrindavan dust, flowers, and *tulasī* leaves. An aluminum vial contains sacred water from the Yamuna River (not intended for drinking). Also included are a small *harināma chadar* (13½" x 13½"), *tulasī* neck beads, laminated cards of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, an image of Prabhupāda's feet, a CD of Prabhupāda chanting, and instructions on how to use the kit. Keep the navy-blue box in the car, by a bedside, or wherever you go. Approximately 7½" x 5¾" x 1½". **$14.95** KXGS634

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Krishna.com USB, 16GB—Keep your files organized with this USB flash drive etched with Krishna.com's logo. All the proceeds of this item go to support Krishna.com. This 16GB USB drive is blank. Approximately 2" x ½". Interface Options: Hi-Speed USB 2.0 & Standard USB 1.1. **$24.95** KXDM116

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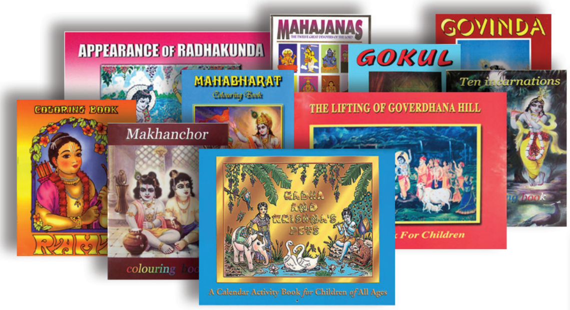
Gifts for Kids



Coloring Books Gift Set—Eleven delightful coloring books for young children. **Save almost $20 on this set.** **$18.95** KXGS107. This gift set includes:

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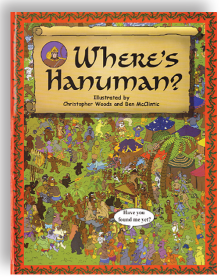
Jagannātha Doll Set—Bring Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā into your children's lives with these soft, delightfully embroidered dolls. **$89.95** G4KD561



Where's Hanuman?—Illustrated by Christopher Woods and Ben McClintic. Twelve great picture adventures for kids of all ages. Find Hanumān and his friends in these brightly illustrated scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Hardbound, 32 pages, 12 illustrated scenes, 9½" x 12". **$9.95** T3BK329

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Set A: Beginner—For instructional ages 3–6. **$154.95** MLBK749
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VEDIC THOUGHTS

The body is just like a chariot or car in which one may go anywhere. One may drive well, or else one may drive whimsically, in which case it is quite possible that he may have an accident and fall into a ditch. In other words, if one takes directions from the experienced spiritual master one can go back home, back to Godhead; otherwise, one may return to the cycle of birth and death.

His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.15.41, Purport

The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is the highest benediction, above any other benedictions; it is sweeter than the sweetest honey, the eternal fruit of transcendental knowledge of the tree of the entire scriptures. O best of the descendants of Bhṛgu, if anyone chants Lord Kṛṣṇa's name just once without offense, whether he chants with faith or indifferently, the holy name immediately liberates him.

Skanda Purāṇa
Quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (11.234)

The pure devotees living in Vaikuṇṭha enjoy forever in varied ways the happiness of directly serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. In comparison, the nectar of liberation appears condemned.

Jaimini Ṛṣī
Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.1.15

But what need is there, Arjuna, for all this detailed knowledge? With a single fragment of Myself I pervade and support this entire universe.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Bhagavad-gītā 10.42

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is so kind to the conditioned souls that if they call upon Him by speaking His holy name, even unintentionally or unwillingly, the Lord is inclined to destroy innumerable sinful reactions in their hearts. Therefore, when a devotee who has taken shelter of the Lord's lotus feet chants the holy name of Kṛṣṇa with genuine love, the Supreme Personality of Godhead can never give up the heart of such a devotee. One who has thus captured the Supreme Lord within his heart is to be known as *bhāgavata-pradhāna,* the most exalted devotee of the Lord.

Havi Ṛṣi
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.55

When the *jīva* [soul] strives for insignificant and evanescent material results, he finds himself grappling with the stringent laws of nature and the inexorable influence of time. But for one who chants the holy names, the Supreme Lord removes all insurmountable obstacles by His causeless mercy.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka 2

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